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Unveiling the Olympic torch

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A selection of the worst love songs and Alan Cross reveals why some romantic ballads can misrepresent your true intentions

NBA **Raps stop Spurs**

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto Raptors centre Jermaine O'Neal gets a hand on the ball last night as San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan drives to the hoop during first-half NBA action in Toronto. The Raps won 91-89, even though Jose Calderon and Chris Bosh sat out with injuries. **Story, pg 15.**

Too close for comfort?

Don't stand so close to me.

That's the message Premier Dalton McGuinty is sending to reporters who cover him day in, day out at the provincial legislature.

In fact, they've been asked to stand five feet back from the premier when posing questions, even though there are fewer journalists working full-time at the legislature.

Reporters routinely stand immediately in front of, or beside, the premier during so-called scrums. McGuinty has joked on occasion about how close they get, but has never appeared uncomfortable or unwilling to endure the question-and-answer sessions. "The premier wants to have slightly more formal q's and a's with media," said Chris Morley, McGuinty's director of communications.

"The premier wants to have ... more formal q's and a's."
Chris Morley

"Reporters will still get to ask the questions and the premier will respond to them. That accountability is an important part of our democracy."

Christopher Dornan, associate professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism, said it's clear the premier's advisers are thinking about "pure optics."

The legislative press gallery decided to take McGuinty's request under advisement, but did not agree to accept the new five-foot rule.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Judge chides city cops

Acquits school bus driver of impaired driving

By all accounts, when school bus driver Jerry McNeill arrived at work, he appeared drunk. His colleagues could see all the signs of impairment even before 39 children climbed aboard the bus he was to drive from a Scarborough water park to downtown Toronto on July 27, 2007.

In court, they testified McNeill seemed unbalanced. He couldn't make coherent conversation. He had difficulty eating a hotdog and kept missing his mouth. And when it was time to leave, he climbed on to the wrong bus and sat down, before realizing his mistake. He ignored advice from the dispatcher to stay put.

When the police picked him up going southbound on the Don Valley Parkway, they noticed his slurred speech, glassy stare, and a pungent odour on his breath.

A breathalyser test the officers gave him was inconclusive. At first, McNeill didn't open his mouth enough; in the second attempt, his teeth obstructed the test. And the third attempt showed up as an error. The officers then arrested McNeill and took him to the police station, where he appeared to "sober up," although the odour of alcohol became more apparent.

But yesterday, a Toronto judge acquitted McNeill on alcohol-related charges, including failure to undergo a roadside breath test, and driving while impaired. He was, however, found guilty of dangerous driving due to a complex medical condition, which led him to act "drunken-like."

McNeill

In light of McNeill's serious medical condition, the judge said he was shocked he would sign up to become a bus driver.

The judge also chided the actions of the police in administering the breath test, citing the officer who admitted he was not adequately trained to use the device. He also felt the three inconclusive results should have not been the basis for the arrest.

The Crown is seeking the harshest penalty of six months in jail and a three-year driving ban.

Sentencing was set for March 4. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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BEAUTY *at the Bay*

Guilty plea made in arsons
Liam Campbell, 41, pleaded guilty yesterday to setting four small fires in the Queen Street West area in the summer of 2007. Campbell is currently imprisoned for break-and-enters related to the fires but is not a suspect in a spate of arsons that have plagued the west end since last summer. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

GO open house tonight in Halton

Expanding the Georgetown-Toronto GO train service is vital to accommodate future growth in Halton, says regional chair Gary Carr. A proposal for stepped-up, all-day service along the line, while viewed negatively in some parts of Toronto, is unlikely to raise objections from Halton residents, who will have the opportunity to learn more about it at a public open house from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. today at Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena in Halton Hills. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Erica Johnson takes a look at the Reader's Digest sweepstakes

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Former prime ministers weigh in on Canada's sagging economy at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Firefighters rescue lone koala from charred landscape left by Australian wildfires at **metronews.ca/world**

Blogs The Blog Street Bullies tackle fake retirements and fans held for ransom in the world of sports

Video Hockey legend Guy Lafleur will stand trial for obstruction of justice at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49: 1, 6, 17, 19, 41 & 42. Bonus 31.
Ontario 49: 3, 18, 20, 28, 33 & 48. Bonus 45.
Ontario Pick 3: 9 1 2; **Ontario Pick 4** : 4 8 3 0
Encore: 6344538
Daily Keno: 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 27, 29, 30, 38, 39, 41, 46, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 59 and 67
These results are not official.

Rain, rain go away

Toronto conservation issues flood warning

A February thaw over the last six days has made those ubiquitous snow piles all but disappear, prompting Environment Canada to issue a rainfall warning and Torontonians to exchange de-icers and shovels for umbrellas and rain boots.

Toronto was set to receive nearly 25 millimetres of rainfall in a 24-hour span since yesterday, said Environment Canada senior climatologist David Phillips. This amount wouldn't warrant a warning during the summer months, but combined with a saturated snow pack, still frozen ground and record high temperatures, it could create flooding and other hazardous conditions, Phillips said.

"The problem is the ground is frozen and 25 millimetres of water plus the snow pack mean the snow disappears rapidly and the run-off is not percolating in the ground. Standing water and puddles are running into rivers and creeks ... and there's the possibility of flooding," Phillips said.

Toronto and Region Conservation issued a flood advisory citing dangerous conditions near rivers and streams and the possibility of street flooding.

Toronto Hydro received numerous reports of weather-related localized power outages. There were also reports of outages in areas across the Greater Toronto Area.

Temperatures in the GTA reached a record setting 8.9 C, yesterday the warmest it's ever been on Feb. 11.

Last year, the temperature was an icy –18.2 C.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

AARON VINCENT ELKAIM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

People walk their dogs through thick fog in Trinity Bellwoods Park yesterday morning. Temperatures in the GTA reached a record-setting 8.9 C — the warmest ever for Feb. 11.

Convincing Ontarians to donate organs

OHIP Unprecedented access to a database of Ontario organ donors is dramatically changing the way hospitals are getting life-saving donations to desperately ill people, says the head of the province's organ and tissue donation agency.

While donation consent has been captured through the province's health insurance program — OHIP — since 1995, it wasn't until November that the Trillium Gift of Life Network gained real-time access to that valuable information.

1,700 The current provincial waiting list for organs sits at nearly 1,700 people — a figure that includes both adults and children. More than 900,000 Ontario residents renew their health cards each year and the province now asks them if they would like to be an organ donor.

"Before, even though people registered their wishes with OHIP, the only way we would know about it is if someone in the hospital or a family member came upon the (health) card while going through the person's wallet," said CEO and president Frank Markel. "Now, when someone goes into hospital and they're a potential donor, we get their OHIP number from the hospital staff. We then call OHIP and they tell us whether the person has registered their wishes to be a donor or not."

An overwhelming need also saw changes made in December to the way the province asks residents if they want to become donors. It's called affirmative registration, and the hope is that it will see more people agree to be donors. The current consent rate in Ontario is 12.5 per cent. In Nova Scotia, where affirmative consent has been the standing policy, 44.3 per cent of eligible residents are on the list.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quick fixes not coming, says premier

POLITICS Premier Dalton McGuinty is warning it will take several budgets to dig the province out of its economic rut.

A lot of work is needed to create the fundamental change the economy needs to thrive and, given Ontario's financial situation, it will take several years to make those changes, McGuinty said yesterday.

Dalton McGuinty

"We cannot lay the foundation for a new economy in one budget," McGuinty said.

"What I'm pursuing here is an agenda that will take several budgets to implement."

McGuinty has already warned of multi-year deficits for the province — starting with a "significant" shortfall in the upcoming spring budget — and is touting renewable energy as a way to create jobs. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Report calls for welfare increases

POVERTY A new report by the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction has suggested that putting money into the hands of those who need it most is the best way to stimulate the economy at a time of global economic uncertainty.

The proposed economic stimulus and poverty reduction package calls on the province to spend $5 billion over the next two years to beef up welfare and other social supports and build new child-care spaces and social housing units. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Possibility grows in Ontario's Greenbelt ~ #3 in a series

Justin Lafontaine is all aboard possibility.

Justin Lafontaine at the Niagara Falls VIA Rail Station

Justin Lafontaine is a committed cyclist whose wheels are always turning. In 2006, he was invited to tour the Niagara region by bike—only to find he couldn't get there from Toronto without a car. "Couldn't" didn't stop Justin. Showing some world-class ingenuity he came up with a unique way to tour the Niagara region's world famous sites by bicycle. His idea: a little engine that could.

Justin went to work getting partners on track. With support from Ontario's Greenbelt, VIA Rail, tourism agencies and government, Justin was able to add a baggage car filled with bike racks to VIA Rail's Toronto-Niagara train. This first of its kind combination created something completely new: The Greenbelt Express. And it's very popular—passengers took almost 1,000 trips in 2008.

Justin's done more than put bike racks in baggage cars. He's built a bridge between urban and rural areas in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way. "The Greenbelt Express offers a great way for urban residents to come out and really experience the amazing countryside the Greenbelt has to offer," he says. "It's a way to connect with the land and the people who live here."

There's one more thing Justin's created with the Greenbelt Express: an award-winning model for green travel that can be adopted anywhere trains run. As Justin puts it, "It gives people a different perspective on weekend get-aways and travel in general. A way to not have to drive a car." With international visitors raving about their Greenbelt Express experience, it's an idea that's spreading around the world.

To see a video of Justin and other stories from Ontario's Greenbelt visit: www.greenbelt.ca

GREEN BELT

Possibility grows here.

PARTNERS IN POSSIBILITY Canadian Environmental Law Association • Environmental Defence • Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation • Ontario Greenbelt Alliance • Grape Growers of Ontario • Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce Ontario Nature • Toronto Cyclists Union • Toronto – Niagara Bike Train • VIA Rail Canada • Wine Council of Ontario

4 local

Top cop post for woman

For the first time in Toronto police history, the most glamorous job in the service is going to a woman.

Insp. Kathryn Martin, a 24-year veteran of the force, has recently been promoted to head of the homicide squad. This post is one of the most sought-after in the organization.

"It is a big deal," says Dr. Amy Ramsay, president of the International Association of Women Police. "It's a big deal having women in homicide. There's no reason why they wouldn't or shouldn't do just as well or better than men."

Martin, in her early 40s, is expected to take the helm April 1, after the current head, Staff Insp. Brian Raybould, is to step down.

Described as smart, sharp and assertive by former colleagues, she's also known as being tenacious and competitive, a woman who has no qualms about leading a predominantly male unit. Currently, only three of 34 investigators are women.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Martin's resume

- Insp. Kathryn Martin held many ranks before joining the homicide squad in 2000.
- After only a few years, she became the first woman to become second-in-command of the 70-person squad.

Chris Noth **Metro's Big-gest fan**

PLANET MAURIE PHOTO

Actor Chris Noth, known for his role as Mr. Big on Sex and the City, reads a copy of Metro yesterday before a guest spot on Virgin Radio. He was in town to promote Sunnybrook Foundation's One Night Live benefit concert on May 21, with Sting, Sheryl Crow and the Canadian Tenors.

$50K reward for 2007 murder tips

DEATH Toronto police are offering a $50,000 reward and making another appeal for help to solve the 2007 murder of a philanthropist who donated millions to environmental and conservation causes.

Police say 66-year-old Glen Davis was likely targeted by his killer when he was gunned down in a parking garage in Toronto on May 18, 2007.

Despite the release of surveillance video that showed a suspect and a person of interest, the murder is still unsolved.

Two people are seen in the video but neither has been identified.

Police say they have no explanations as to why someone would want to kill Davis. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

CHARGES Police have upgraded murder charges for three men suspected in the killing of Ali Garakan, whose body was found in a burning car outside Barrie in November. Mohammad Al Kazragy, Payam Khastou and Arash Arashvand's second-degree murder charges have been upgraded to first-degree murder.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Police searching for suspect in robbery

Police are looking for two men who tied up and blindfolded a man at gunpoint Monday and robbed his workplace. The 39-year-old employee at Crane Supply, at 615 Dixon Road, near Martin Grove Road, was not injured. The men took cash and some copper pipes and fittings. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Ruling on pay raises not in judges' favour

ECONOMY In a tough economy, there's no mercy for judges.

Canada's 1,000 federally appointed judges, who were seeking to push their remuneration to $307,000 by 2011, were told yesterday they must live with salary restraints similar to other public servants.

2006 cuts

- In 2006, the federal Conservatives scaled back a 10.5 per cent judicial pay raise supported in principle by Paul Martin's Liberal government.

The base pay for most is currently about $260,000, and the hike would represent an 18 per cent increase.

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson delivered the news in the government's long-awaited response to recommendations made last year by an independent commission on judicial salaries. But he didn't indicate what increase the government would offer.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Alomar allegations

Ex-Blue Jay facing AIDS spreading claim

There's a sense of concern, sympathy and disbelief surrounding a lawsuit that alleges Roberto Alomar, a beloved ex-Blue Jay, has AIDS.

Alomar is alleged in a lawsuit to have insisted on having unprotected sex, while claiming repeatedly that he was disease-free, with ex-girlfriend Ilya Dall, 31. She makes the charges in a suit that was first reported in the New York media.

Among her more explosive allegations is that Alomar told her he'd been raped by two men while playing baseball in the southwestern U.S. when he was 17 years of age.

The allegations have caused a stir around the baseball world, but especially in Toronto, where Alomar is fondly remembered and honoured, and in his native Puerto Rico, where he has iconic status.

In papers filed in state and federal court in New York, Dall said Alomar, 41, was told repeatedly by doctors to get tested for HIV and finally did so January 2006. The $15-million US negligence suit alleges: "The test results of him being HIV-positive was given to him and the plaintiff on or about Feb. 6, 2006."

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Roberto Alomar is facing a $15-million lawsuit.

Alomar, who was once engaged to tennis star Mary Pierce, has not commented on the suit and his lawyer would not say whether Alomar is HIV-positive.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Full circle for new Toronto Star editor

MEDIA When a young British newspaperman named Michael Cooke first visited Toronto in 1974, he decided to visit the Toronto Star newsroom.

Michael Cooke

It would prove to be a whim with far reaching consequences. An on-duty Star editor offered the Fleet Street reporter a copy editing shift that evening.

Within days, Cooke had a job at the Star and a new home in Canada. Thirty-five years later, after leading newsrooms across Canada and the U.S., Cooke is returning to the Star as editor.

"This is a magnificent closing of the circle," said Cooke, currently editor-in-chief of the Chicago Sun-Times. "It gives me goose bumps. … You're working with people who would attack a tank with a knife for the Toronto Star … That paper is adored and loved by the people who work for it and to be able to go there and be in the most competitive newspaper city in North America is just a great place to be."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

TOURISM A new report says Ontario's tourism industry needs a cash infusion from both public and private sectors to create more tourist destinations across the province. The report also called for the province to double its tourism receipts by 2020.

CRIME Police have charged a man in connection with a hit-and-run in North York Tuesday that sent a woman to hospital. The woman was crossing Jane Street when she was hit by a blue panel van that was turning from Chalkfarm Drive.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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BEAUTY *at the Bay*

Principal says he was threatened

Police in New Brunswick are investigating an alleged death threat against a school principal resulting from his decision to end the singing of O Canada at the start of each school day. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Lafleur ordered to stand trial

Hockey legend Guy Lafleur, left, will have to stand trial in April on a charge of obstruction of justice after a judge said yesterday there was no justification for the stay of proceedings he had been seeking. The charge was laid last year after Lafleur agreed to supervise his son, who faces several charges, and to ensure he abided by a court-ordered curfew. But it was later revealed the elder Lafleur drove his son to a hotel so he could spend time with a girlfriend. THE CANADIAN PRESS

365 days to 2010 Games

Vancouver marks one-year countdown to Olympics

JEFF HODSON
Metro Canada

The final year of preparations for the 2010 Games will be "tenfold" more challenging than any year before it, VANOC CEO John Furlong said last night at an event to mark the one-year countdown to the Games.

About 100 journalists gathered at the Whistler Sliding Centre last night to watch the Olympic countdown clock turn from 366 to 365 days remaining before the Games.

"Just think about it," Furlong said minutes after ringing a final-lap bell. "This time next year the Olympic flame will be metres away from the Olympic Stadium.

"The journey will be coming to an end and it will be the most unbelievable, magical time in the history of our province."

Today, the actual one-year mark (the Olympics begin Feb. 12, 2010), celebrations will take place across B.C. and the country as VANOC has asked all Canadians across every time zone to make noise at 6 p.m.

KARI MEDIG/FOR METRO CANADA

British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell sits in a bobsled yesterday at the Whistler Sliding Centre in Whistler, B.C. Today marks the one-year countdown until the start of the 2010 Olympics.

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

In Richmond, B.C., the province will mark the one-year countdown with a celebration at the Richmond Olympic Oval. And in Vancouver, Grammy-winner Sarah McLachlan headlines a sold-out countdown concert beginning at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. The world will also get its first glimpse of the Olympic torch and torchbearer uniforms during an unveiling ceremony in Whistler.

The final year, Furlong said, will be spent testing systems and programs and "perfecting the experience" that people will have at the Games. He said he's optimistic the sports venues will be completed — and are testing well with athletes — and that major infrastructure projects, like the Sea To Sky Highway, are nearing completion. One enormous challenge that remains will be the training of tens of thousands of Olympic volunteers.

International Olympics Committee president Jacques Rogge, who toured all the Olympic sporting venues yesterday, said he was pleased with VANOC's progress.

"Everything bodes well for the future of the Games."

Bryant vows to protect auto jobs

ECONOMY Ontario Economic Development Minister Michael Bryant says the province will find a way to protect its auto jobs even though GM Canada is no longer seeking an emergency loan in the province.

The Ontario and federal governments are still negotiating a bridge loan for Chrysler Canada after promising in December to spend $4 billion to help the two struggling automakers.

But GM no longer wants its portion of the aid package and is crafting a new plan to present to the government next week.

During initial negotiations in the fall, Bryant had argued Canada should offer its aid ahead of the U.S. to ensure jobs were protected in Ontario.

It's unclear what negotiating power the province has now that the initial threats of bankruptcy have passed for the automakers, and Bryant declined to speculate about how jobs may be affected by any new plan.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Joint solution

- Michael Bryant says Canada and the U.S. are looking for a solution that makes sense for both countries.

Broadcasters want CRTC to revisit issue of carriage fees

MEDIA Canada's conventional television broadcasters are renewing their calls for a carriage fee in light of a report that shows the biggest private broadcasters' profits plummeted by almost 93 per cent last year.

Last fall, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission rejected a request by conventional broadcasters such as Global and CTV to charge cable and satellite distributors for carrying their channels.

The charge would have added anywhere from $2 to $10 to a subscriber's monthly bill and brought in an estimated $300 million in revenues to the broadcasters, but the CRTC said the networks failed to prove they had enough economic need for the higher revenues.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO HYDRO PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM UPDATE

Toronto Hydro-Electric System Limited is making progress in remediating handwells and streetlights. As of Monday, February 9, 2009 an estimated 35% of the handwell and streetlight assets had been inspected. Inspections and remediation are taking place during the daytime. Mobile voltage sweeps, and repairs if necessary, are continuing at night when streetlights are energized.

As reported earlier, the accelerated action is being taken after a report that some children received a minor shock. Toronto Hydro immediately deployed all non-emergency crews to its contact voltage program. All available resources have been assigned to find and remediate equipment that may pose a safety hazard.

Once handwells have been remediated the handwell cover is sprayed red. The red is temporary and serves as a signal to other Toronto Hydro employees working in the same area that the handwell has been inspected. The red paint should only last a few days to a week depending on weather conditions. Toronto Hydro reminds customers that it is always a good idea to stay clear of electrical equipment.

Toronto Hydro urges anyone who is concerned about contact voltage in their neighbourhood to stay clear of the area and immediately call our **dedicated hotline at 416-222-3773**.

For more information, please visit **www.torontohydro.com/voltageinspection**

toronto hydro electric system

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Eglinton Square Shopping Centre
Fairview Mall
Gerrard Square
Royal Bank Plaza
Toronto Eaton Centre
Toronto Stock Exchange Tower
Woodbine Centre
Yorkdale Mall
York Lanes (York University)
2187 Queen St. E (The Beach)
2501 Yonge St. (at Castlefield)
363 Front St. W (City Place)
455 Danforth Ave.
155 - 720 King St. W
5015 Yonge St.
38 - 1500 Royal York Rd.
8 - 1750 The Queensway

WEST

Burlington Mall
Mapleview Mall
Milton Crossroads Centre

Brampton
Bramalea City Centre
60 Great Lakes Dr.
(inside Home Depot)
2880 Queen St. E
(Hwy. 7 & Airport Rd.)
26 - 55 Mountainash Rd.
10 - 80 Pertosa Dr.

Mississauga
Dixie Outlet Mall
Erin Mills Town Centre
Heartland Town Centre
Square One
Winston Churchill & 401
6535B Mississauga Rd.
2458 Dundas St. W
G16 - 3024 Hurontario St.
1A - 1370 Dundas St. E
9 - 34 Bristol Rd. E
2 - 4920 Tomken Rd.
101 - 6200 Dixie Rd.

Oakville
Oakville Place
RioCan Burloak
299 Lakeshore Rd. E
18 - 2501 Third Line
D3 - 2335 Trafalgar Rd.
760 Pacific Rd.

NORTH

Maple
3 - 10019 Keele St.

Markham
Georgian Mall
Markville Shopping Centre
Pacific Mall
Upper Canada Mall

Richmond Hill
Hillcrest Shopping Centre
4 - 11005 Yonge St.
9301 Bathurst St.

Thornhill
Promenade Mall
7171 Yonge St.
8117 Yonge St.

Vaughan
Vaughan Mills Outlet Mall
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A7 - 4220 Steeles Ave. W

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Bill aims to help auto repair shops

Car mechanics, auto associations and Pollution Probe are backing an NDP private member's bill which would provide greater access to auto-repair technology. The bill aims to make it easier for auto-repair shops to obtain the tools and technology needed to work on modern, computerized vehicles. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Khadr won't come up in Obama visit

Guantanamo Bay detainee Omar Khadr is a "wounded boy" who needs to come home to Canada to heal, his lawyer said yesterday, but a chorus of pleas for Prime Minister Stephen Harper to press U.S. President Barack Obama on the issue fell on deaf ears.

Harper's spokesman Kory Teneycke said the Khadr file will not come up when the prime minister meets Obama next week.

"I don't anticipate either (leader) will raise it," Teneycke told The Canadian Press from Ottawa.

Teneycke said Washington had not asked Canada to take its citizen, who is charged in the U.S. with war crimes for allegedly killing an American soldier in Afghanistan when he was 15.

Last month, Obama halted military commission proceedings against Khadr while a panel reviewed the cases of Guantanamo Bay detainees charged with crimes. The Toronto-born Khadr, 22, is the lone westerner held at the infamous U.S. prison in Cuba, which Obama has pledged to close within a year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

HOSPITAL A woman who donated $50,000 toward a new in-patient unit at Atlantic Canada's largest children's hospital says she was heartbroken when several families wrote to complain that six of the rooms would be transformed into office space

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Comment & Views

Comment

The conundrum over Afghanistan

Home&Abroad

Andrew Cohen

Canada & world insight

For months, perhaps years, we have heard how the situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating.

The spread of corruption, the return of the Taliban, the ineptitude of the police, the mounting violence, as we saw again yesterday — all suggest a war that seems unwinnable in a country that seems ungovernable.

Last weekend, in Munich, representatives of NATO met to discuss the Afghan war, which has been going on since the fall of 2001.

The United States sent its vice-president, its secretary of state and its newly-appointed special envoy to the region, the highly-esteemed former ambassador, Richard Holbrooke.

How bad are things? This is how Holbrooke put it: "Let's not kid ourselves: The task ahead of us is far, far more difficult than anything that has been said this morning. I have never, in my experience in the U.S. government that started in Vietnam, ever seen anything as difficult as the situation that confronts the countries involved in Afghanistan and Pakistan at this point. We've only scratched the surface."

Holbrooke noted, with disdain, the members of NATO who pledge help and deliver none. In the distribution of foreign assistance, he lamented that he has "never remotely seen anything like the mess we've inherited." On the whole, he said, the challenge in Afghanistan is "tougher than Iraq."

(For these references, I am indebted to my colleague, Paul Wells of Maclean's, the only Canadian journalist to cover the conference. He has posted some of the proceedings on his blog).

What Holbrooke says is supported by Ahmed Rashid, the Pakistani journalist and author who has written widely on Afghanistan. In Descent Into Chaos, he says Iraq is a sideshow. Afghanistan is the home of the Islamic insurgency, and we're losing — though he adds that it isn't too late.

And what about Canada, which plans to leave Afghanistan in 2011? Defence Minister Peter MacKay, Canada's lone representative at the conference, offered a few platitudes, but concluded, "the Alliance has achieved notable successes in Afghanistan."

He said, though, that "we still have a long way to go." It neatly sets up the critical question for Canada as the Americans, who are sending more troops to Afghanistan, ask us to reconsider our departure.

Will we note the successes, declare victory and leave? Or will we acknowledge the failures, fear defeat, and stay?

Andrew Cohen teaches journalism at Carleton University. He is the author of Extraordinary Canadians: Lester B. Pearson.

Views

Political games behind the 2010 Games

TheWestView

Paul Sullivan

Journalist & Media Consultant

The 2010 Winter Olympics are exactly one year away.

I suspect most Canadians greeted by that news will smile a little and start hoping we win lots of medals, or, if nothing else, gold in hockey.

The last time we hosted the Winter Olympics, in Calgary in 1988, we all had a good time, but Canada didn't win any gold medals.

So the excitement is starting to build across the country.

Here in Vancouver, on the other hand, you'd think we were beset by the plague.

I've never seen or heard anything like it, although it's probably the same in every city awarded the dubious distinction of hosting an Olympics. The Games have become the scapegoat for every social activist, environmentalist, anarchist, conspiracy theorist, not to mention a vast array of uncategorized unhappy campers.

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

Now that there's one year to go, that's the signal to ramp up the wailing, the gnashing of teeth.

If you're an environmentalist, it's time to get even more uncivilly disobedient over the loss of animal habitat to make way for improvements to the Sea to Sky Highway to Whistler.

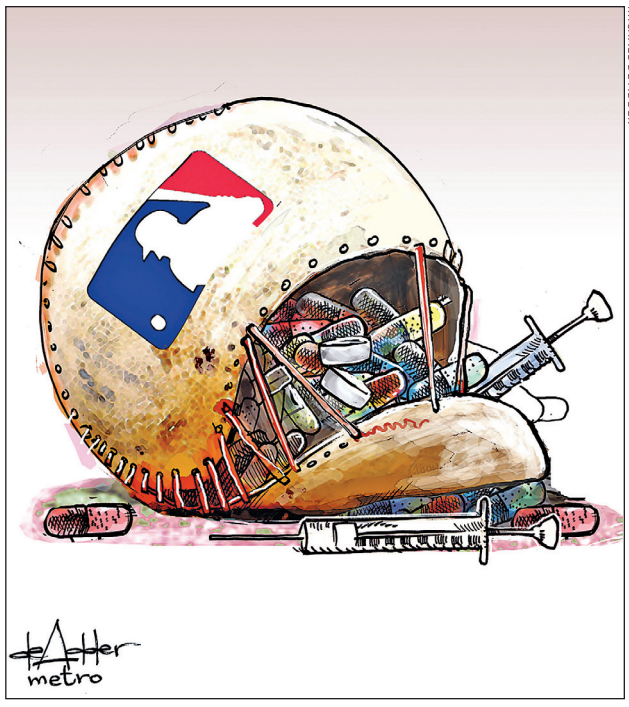
If you're a taxpayer, it's your cue to get increasingly furious that no one really knows how much the Games will cost, but you know you'll get stuck with the bill.

If you're a social activist, it's time to kick some real butt. Why haven't these billions gone to provide shelter for the homeless, help the sick and feed the poor?

Now, if only we can make it through the next 12 months. Let the pre-Games games begin.

Do you agree or disagree? Email Paul Sullivan at torontoletters@metronews.ca.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting.



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Russia may allow shipment of Afghan-bound arms
Russia is open to letting the U.S. and NATO ship weaponry across its territory to Afghanistan if the broader relationship improves, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Coalition talks begin

Hardliner holds key to Israeli government

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and hardline leader Benjamin Netanyahu both claimed victory yesterday following Israel's inconclusive vote, leaving the kingmaker role to a rising political hawk with an anti-Arab platform.

Livni's Kadima party won 28 seats, just one more than Netanyahu's Likud.

The results set the stage for what could be weeks of coalition negotiations. Yesterday, Netanyahu met the head of the ultra-Orthodox Shas faction and Livni met Avigdor Lieberman, whose ultranationalist party received 15 seats and emerged as the third-largest force in parliament.

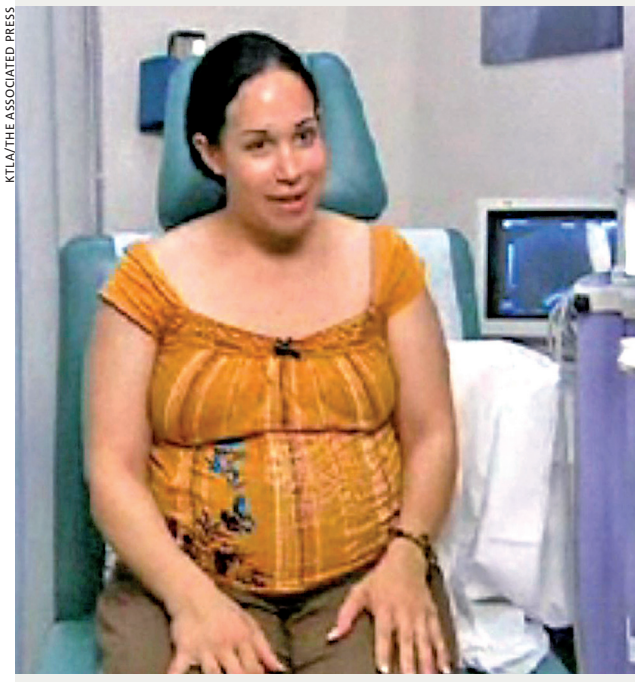
It's up to Israeli President Shimon Peres to decide whether Livni or Netanyahu should have the first shot at forming a government.

However, the final word may be up to Lieberman, a former Netanyahu protege, who says he wants to redraw Israel's borders in order to push out heavily Arab areas and require those who remain to sign a loyalty oath or lose the right to vote or run for office.

Some 20 per cent of Israel's seven million citizens are Arabs, and about a dozen serve in parliament.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Octuplets **Food stamps for mom**



KTLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nadya Suleman, seen in this still from a 2006 video taken in an in vitro fertilization clinic in Los Angeles, told NBC's Today show that she's "not living off taxpayer money" but that she has been receiving about $490 US worth of food stamps. Suleman, a single mother who already had six children through in vitro fertilization, gave birth on Jan. 26 to octuplets.

Lawmakers tell bankers to clean up their act

STIMULUS The top members of a key House panel told banking leaders yesterday they must win over a disgusted public and work harder to right the deeply troubled financial system.

Rep. Barney Frank, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, also asked banks to impose a moratorium on mortgage foreclosures until U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner comes up with a mortgage modification.

Taxpayers are furious with big banks that benefited from the bailout designed to get credit moving again but that also spent lavishly on company retreats and office redecorating, and lawmakers are feeling the heat for signing off on the $700-billion US plan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Agreed

- U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced agreement yesterday on the economic stimulus bill that he said should create 3.5 million jobs.

N.Korean missile could reach U.S.

TEST North Korea appears to be gearing up for another long-range missile test.

In recent weeks, Pyongyang has declared it will scrap peace agreements with South Korea and warned of war, the latest in a string of moves seemingly aimed at winning the attention of the Obama administration.

Reports that it could be preparing to test a missile capable of reaching the western United States have added to the anxiety.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indonesia issues tsunami warning

EARTHQUAKE Indonesia's geological agency issued a tsunami warning after a quake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.5 struck off its eastern coast.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the quake was centred about 330 kilometres northeast of Manado, a town on Sulawesi island. It says it had a depth of about 30 kilometres beneath the ocean floor.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teacher's side job raised red light

TRYST Authorities say an Ohio fourth-grade teacher had a side job as a prostitute, and even skipped class after using a school computer to arrange an afternoon tryst at a motel.

Officials said 35-year-old Amber Carter was arrested Tuesday at a motel parking lot in Bellefontaine.

Carter never received a reprimand in 13 years as a teacher. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Less demand for corporate jets prompts 1,000 layoffs at Pratt & Whitney
Quebec-based aircraft-engine manufacturer Pratt & Whitney Canada said yesterday it will lay off 1,000 people worldwide over the coming months. The layoffs will affect those in the manufacturing sector as well as employees who handle the company's administrative and customer-service operations. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business

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Provinces have good credit rating

MOODY'S The financial health of Canada's provinces will deteriorate over the next 12 to 18 months due to the slowdown in their economies, but the provincial governments are still in relatively good shape, credit-rating agency Moody's said in a report yesterday.

Moody's attributed the provinces' ability to withstand the declining revenues and higher expenses caused by the downturn to the fact that the provinces have reduced debt over the past few years.

Alberta and British Columbia get Moody's highest rating of triple-A.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

In brief

RIM Shares in Research In Motion dropped almost 17 per cent yesterday after the BlackBerry maker said it expects fourth-quarter profits will come in at the lower end of its profit guidance. The forecast came despite strong numbers of net subscribers in the quarter and revenue that is expected to reach the middle of a previously forecast range.

DIVIDEND Bell Canada parent BCE Inc. is raising its dividend five per cent in a move to shore up investor confidence after the demise of its takeover. The telecom giant said it lost $48 million in the fourth quarter, or six cents per share, compared with a year-earlier profit of $2.4-billion or $2.93 per share.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

From surplus to trade deficit

Exports plunge 9.7 per cent

Canada has recorded its first trade deficit since 1976 — the year Microsoft and Apple Computer began and Mao Zedong died — as imports dropped and exports dropped even faster amid a global economic downturn.

Statistics Canada reported yesterday that the country had a trade deficit of $458 million in December, a sharp reversal from a surplus of $1.2 billion in November. The deficit was the first since March 1976.

The agency said exports dropped 9.7 per cent to $35.3 billion as both prices and volumes declined. It was the steepest month-to-month decrease since October 1982.

South of border

- The recession and massive costs for the financial bailout have pushed the U.S. federal deficit to an all-time high of $569 billion US, more than six times larger than the imbalance from a year ago.
- The deficit for January alone totalled $83.8 billion US, worse than the $78 billion economists expected.

Imports declined 5.7 per cent to $35.8 billion.

Canadian exports of everything from oil and gas to autos and agricultural goods fell, mainly because the U.S. economic slump worsened.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

China Sharp drop in exports

ANDY WONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A sales clerk waits for business yesterday at a shop in China selling fashion merchandize inside a textiles wholesale market in Beijing. China's exports plunged 17.5 per cent in January, the sharpest drop in more than a decade, as the collapse in its trade accelerated, adding to the threat of more job losses.

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Joba impersonator pleads guilty
A 30-year-old man who authorities say scammed businesses by claiming he was New York Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain has pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct. Ryan Ward of Toms River, N.J., entered the plea yesterday and was fined $2,518 US. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Maybe this time it will take

Brett Favre told the New York Jets yesterday he was retiring after 18 seasons, ending a record-setting career in which he became one of the NFL's all-time greats. He or the team does not expect a change of heart. Last March, Favre announced his retirement from the Packers only to change his mind three months later and force a trade to the Jets.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: JOHN CHICK, JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Barns, Ukic spur Raps

NBA RESULT

Spurs 89 **Raptors** 91

SAN ANTONIO SPURS VS TORONTO RAPTORS

Andrea Bargnani scored 23 points, while rookie Roko Ukic poured in a career-high 22 to lead the short-handed Raptors to a 91-89 victory over the San Antonio Spurs last night.

The unlikely win that came without stars Chris Bosh and Jose Calderon snapped a three-game losing streak at the Air Canada Centre, and sends the Raptors (21-34) into this weekend's all-star festivities on a two-game win streak.

Jason Kapono added 21 points for Toronto while Jermaine O'Neal added a team-high 10 rebounds to go with seven points.

Without Bosh and Calderon, just eight Raptors were on the court. Calderon missed the game with a sore right hamstring, the same injury that sidelined him for 10 games in January and two in November, while Bosh sat his fourth consecutive game with a sprained right knee.

Compounding Toronto's injury woes, Joey Graham, who was coming off a 24-point performance the previous night, left the game with 2:56 left in the first quarter with a left shin contusion. Still, Toronto held its own all night, leading by as much as nine points in the first half and never trailing by more than six in the opening three quarters. The Spurs led 69-67 heading into the final 12 minutes.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Roko Ukic passes to Jamario Moon over Manu Ginobili last night. Ukic shot 9-of-13 and had a career-high 22 points.

Calderon sits

- Anthony Parker started at point guard, but rookie Roko Ukic played the majority of the game at the one spot.

One year: 10 to watch in '10

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

One year from today, the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics begin. Here are 10 Canadian medal hopes to keep in mind:

Jenn Heil, women's moguls
She put Canada on the board with Olympic gold on opening day in Turin in 2006 and there will be intense pressure on her to do it again in Vancouver when women's moguls once again is on the first day of competition.

Kristina Groves, long track speedskating
She's been racking up impressive results for six years now, but on a team with Jeremy Wotherspoon, Cindy Klassen and Clara Hughes, it's hard for her to get a little attention. But with Klassen and Wotherspoon both trying to come back from serious injury next year, Groves could be the team's star.

Pierre Lueders, two-man bobsleigh
He's going to have hundreds more runs on the Olympic layout in Whistler than his competitors, plus he finally has a decent budget for equipment.

Steve Omischl, men's aerials
He's won everything else in his sport: A world title, and three Crystal Globes as the overall World Cup freestyle aerials champion.

Canada's hockey teams
The men will be led by NHL stars like Sidney Crosby and Jarome Iginla and should face their toughest opposition from Russia and Sweden. On the women's side, barring any big upsets it will be Canada vs. the U.S. for gold for the fourth straight Olympics.

Canada's curling teams
Reigning world champion Jennifer Jones is the most likely representative on the women's side, while Glenn Howard and Kevin Martin will probably battle it out among the men.

Alex Bilodeau, men's moguls
Jennifer Heil calls Bilodeau her "little brother," but this 21-year-old takes a back seat to no

Kristina Groves

Countdown

- Today at noon, hundreds are expected at Nathan Phillips Square to celebrate the Games' countdown with Olympians, Paralympians, and the official 2010 Winter Games mascots.

one. They are both coached by former freestyler Dominick Gauthier, who is also Heil's boyfriend.

Patrick Chan, men's figure skating
The world championships next month in Los Angeles will be a big stepping stone for the 18-year-old Torontonian.

Clara Hughes, long track speedskating
She's got two Olympic bronze medals in cycling from the 1996 Atlanta Games and a gold, silver and bronze in Olympic speed skating in '02 and '06.

Tessa Virtue/Scott Moir, ice dancing
It's felt they've got the goods to win the whole thing in 2010, but that will be dependent on Virtue being 100 per cent and able to put in the hard training they'll need this summer.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Walker, Whitt to Canadian hall

BASEBALL Larry Walker and Ernie Whitt lead this year's class of inductees for the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. Bernie Soulliere and the late Roy (Doc) Miller will also be inducted June 20 in St. Mary's, Ont. Walker, a native of Maple Ridge, B.C., was 1997 National League MVP. He won three batting titles while compiling a career .313 batting average.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sports in brief

MLB The Houston Astros' Miguel Tejada pleaded guilty yesterday to lying to U.S. Congress about using performance-enhancing drugs and admitted buying human growth hormone. Tejada will be sentenced March 26.

MLB ESPN reported yesterday that Bobby Abreu has reached a deal on a one-year contract with the Los Angeles Angels. The outfielder hit .296 with 100 RBIs for the Yankees in 2008.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
TORONTO 91 San Antonio 89
Charlotte 101 Washington 89
Cleveland 109 Phoenix 92
Denver 82 Orlando 73
Philadelphia 91 Memphis 87
Atlanta 99 Detroit 95
Indiana at Milwaukee
Boston at New Orleans
Sacramento at Houston
L.A. Lakers at Utah
Oklahoma City at Portland
New York at L.A. Clippers

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Ottawa 3 Buffalo 1
Chicago 3 Atlanta 1
New Jersey 4 N.Y. Islanders 2
N.Y. Rangers 5 Washington 4 (SO)
Pittsburgh 2 San Jose 1 (SO)
Colorado at Minnesota
Phoenix at Dallas
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Gonchar may play Saturday vs. Leafs
Pittsburgh Penguins defenceman Sergei Gonchar has been cleared to play after missing the entire season with a dislocated left shoulder. METRO NEWS SERVICES

It's all how you see it

TheHockeyNews
Ryan Kennedy

thehockeynews.com

Once again, this year's incarnation of the Blue and White offers fans a choice: Half full or half empty.

For the second time in seven days, the Leafs had what the kids would refer to as an "epic fail" against the Florida Panthers, proving in the process the focus one club has to make the post-season and the lack thereof on the part of the other.

The "half empty" portion of the equation is pretty easy to figure out: This Toronto squad has difficulty holding leads, which becomes doubly toxic considering how often it gives up the first goal in a hockey game.

So where does the "half full" come in? Well, for all you cynical fans out there, the Buds are now officially in position for one of the two amazing assets available in this summer's entry draft; scoring sensation and hometown boy John Tavares, or behemoth puck-moving Swedish defenceman Victor Hedman. Since the draft order is determined by a weighted lottery, it behooves a bad team to at least be in the NHL's bottom five in this situation.

Another emerging trend that will shine just a wee bit of light on the hearts of Leaf Nation is the recent play of the once-maligned Jason Blake.

The diminutive winger seems to have learned from the sharp messages sent to him via benchings by straight-talk coach Ron Wilson earlier in the season and is playing his best hockey in a Leafs jersey to date.

To wit; in Blake's first 20 games with the Leafs this season, he tallied just 10 points. This was also the period in which he was scratched twice and missed a couple games due to a head injury.

But lately, Blake has been on fire, notching 19 points in his past 15 games, including a stunning five-point outburst against the Carolina Hurricanes.

His chemistry with most recent linemates Niklas Hagman and Dominic Moore (a line that essentially unites the three forwards who have been best on the Leafs for different stretches this season) is obvious and the trio is doing it with speed and grit — witness Hagman's recent puck-off-the-face shift that ended in a goal of the year against Florida last week.

With Blake back to the agitating, driving winger he was during his career year as a member of the New York Islanders, the Leafs are finally seeing the player they signed to a big contract two summers ago.

And while the deal was still no financial steal for the Buds, Blake is certainly proving his worth now. In fact, if he can keep up his current pace, he'll best his career high in points for a season.

The Hockey News thn.com

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Nivea LipCare CareGloss & Shine, right, comes in red and pink. Available at major drug, pharmacy and mass merchandise stores across Canada for $3.59 each. For more, go to nivea.ca. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Valentine's Day

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

All for love

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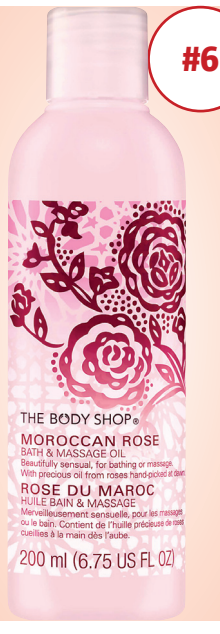

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#1 Diamonds are forever

Visit: walmart.ca
10K diamond heart pendants in white gold ($89.88 each), at Wal-Mart.

#2 Candy kisses

Visit: eatmywords.org
Lion's Share Truffles ($49 for a box of eight). For sale at Scotia Plaza, Feb. 12-13.

#3 Happy times

Visit: timex.ca
Timex Crystal Collection watch ($120). At The Bay and Sears.

#4 For the love birds

Visit: foxyoriginals.com
Love Bird necklace with Swarovski crystals, by Foxy Originals ($32).

#5 Butter her up

Visit: cakebeauty.com
Sweet Cheeks Buttery Body Bubbles cinnamon-scented body wash ($18).

#6 A Rose for a rose

Visit: thebodyshop.ca
Moroccan Rose Bath & Massage Oil ($16). Features a fresh, dewy scent.

#7 Fun and games

Visit: chapters.indigo.ca
This Scrabble Heart Edition ($19.99 SRP) is available at Chapters Indigo.

#8 Shower her with love

Visit: sephora.com
Philosophy Hot Dots Shower Gel, exclusively at Sephora ($21).

#9 An apple a day

Visit: fruits-passion.com
Effervescent Hearts for the Bath, in Apple Illusion scent ($6.50).

#10 X-rated treat

Visit: xratedfusion.com
X-Rated Fusion Liqueur ($35.55 SRP). Perfect with champagne, or over ice.

Sweet treat
Just in time for Valentine's Day, Nestlé has launched Kit Kat Senses, which combines wafers with a hazelnut cream filling. Available at grocery and retail outlets across Canada for $1.09-$1.29 per bar. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Home, where the heart is

Treat your loved one to a meal made from scratch

NOELLE MUNARETTO
for Metro Canada

If you've made reservations at a swanky restaurant for you and your lover this Valentine's Day, you might want to instead consider booking a table at a much more familiar joint — your home.

In fact, surprising someone you love with a home-cooked meal or even inviting them to join in on the preparation can provide a Valentine's experience that no restaurant can.

"You don't have to deal with reservations, high prices and the anxiety of getting the right place," says Tom Fillipou, executive chef for Loblaws Cooking Schools. "At home you can relax, take your time and put together a great meal."

No Valentine's Day meal is complete without chocolate. These truffles by LPK's Culinary Groove (718 Queen St. E.) are $2.25 each.

Surprising someone with a home-cooked meal can be special.

Fillipou says that for culinary beginners, making a meal together with your date can be easy if you do a little prep work in advance.

"If you plan your evening out and you've got your groceries there, it's a lot of fun," he says.

Begin by designing your meal around a main course. Consulting cookbooks, the Internet, or kitchen-savvy friends are all great ways to get recipes. Then head out to the grocery store a couple of days in advance to pick up the necessary ingredients.

For budget-minded shoppers, Great Cooks co-owner and executive chef Maggie McKeown suggests buying seasonal ingredients and only buying the exact amount of food needed.

"Also, colour is always a really dominant theme," says McKeown. "You think of red, pink, chocolate and aphrodisiacs."

McKeown will be teaching a sold-out couples cooking class today in the Great Cooks studio. On the menu are decadent dishes such as beef tenderloin with cherry pinot noir sauce, and a passion fruit vinaigrette salad. She says recipes like these are all designed to be easy for couples to replicate at home.

"And if you're doing it at home, you can create your own atmosphere by lighting candles and choosing the music that you want," says McKeown, who also says that significant others will appreciate the cooking gesture.

"You're actually putting effort into something and giving it to someone and that is pretty special," she adds.

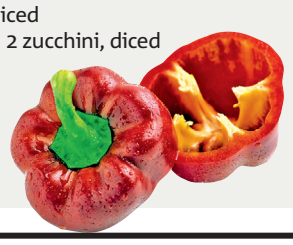
Cooking up a Valentine's feast isn't just for lovers either. This year, celebrity chef Todd English partnered with online dating company Lavalife to create do-it-yourself menus for a couple's night in and for a "Single and Lovin' It" soirée.

"Both couples and singles should enjoy Valentine's Day," says English. "It is a day to appreciate your loved one and also a day to look for a new potential love interest."

Other options for after-dinner chocolate include, from left: Le Chocolat Valentine's Collection, $9.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart, and President's Choice Fair Trade Dark Chocolate, $2.49.

Roasted Red Pepper Pasta

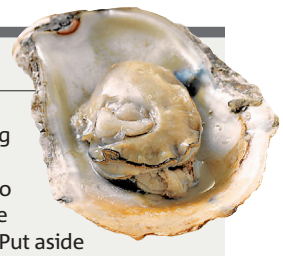
Ingredients:
- 5 red peppers, cleaned
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, whole
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 box PC Blue Menu Omega 3 or Whole Wheat Spaghetti
- 1/2 medium eggplant, diced
- 2 zucchini, diced
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup Parmesan Reggiano cheese, grated



Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 425F. Core peppers and chop into large pieces. In a large bowl, combine peppers, onion slices and garlic; arrange in single layer on baking sheet. Roast in oven for approximately 30 minutes or until desired level of caramelization has occurred.
2. Meanwhile, cook pasta to package directions.
3. Remove peppers from oven and scrape contents into food processor or blender. Puree, strain and pour into large sauce pan. Season to taste, add fresh thyme and simmer to reduce by 1/4 volume.
4. While sauce is simmering, heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large sauté pan. Add eggplant and zucchini and sauté until soft.
5. Drain pasta and place in large bowl. Add desired amount of red pepper sauce and mix well. Add zucchini, eggplant and cheese, and mix well. Serves 4-6.

– RECIPE COURTESY OF LOBLAWS

Baked Oysters, for two



Ingredients:
- 10 each Wellfleet oysters
- kosher salt, as needed
- 4 oz. mascarpone
- 2 tbsp shredded radicchio
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp chopped scallions
- 1 oz. heavy cream

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 425F. Shuck the oysters, opening each one; discard the top half of the shell and keep the oysters on the half shell.
2. Layer the bottom of a baking pan heavily with kosher salt. Place the oysters on the salt, pressing them down so they are sturdy. Put aside and start the stuffing.
3. Place the mascarpone, radicchio, balsamic vinegar, scallions, and cream in a mixing bowl. Mix ingredients together well. Evenly place all of the filling on the oysters.
4. Bake for about 10 minutes or until the top is brown. Remove from the baking pan and serve immediately.

– TODD ENGLISH RECIPE

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GOLDEN HARVEST SEAFOODS

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Pamper him
This Kiehl's Ultimate Man gift set ($72.50) includes Facial Fuel. Available at Kiehl's stores (407 Queen St. W. and 2518 Yonge St.), at 416-483-1335 and at select Holt Renfrew stores across Canada. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gifts to make him blush

Show him you love him with everything from boxers to gel

#1 Capture his heart

At electronics retailers
This Olympus FE-360 camera has 3x optical zoom and 8 megapixels ($129).

#2 All about romance

Visit: gapcanada.com
Heart-Stamped Boxers in soft cotton ($18), available at Gap.

#3 For the coffee lover

Visit: hallmark.com
My Guy mug ($9.95), available at Hallmark Gold Crown stores.

#4 Timeless love

Visit: longines.com
Men's Longines Admiral 24-Hour watch ($2,950-$3,300).

#5 Fun and frugal

Visit: walmart.ca
Men's heart boxers ($7 for a pack of two), available at Wal-Mart.

#6 Make a splash

Visit: lush.ca
Hello Sailor gift set includes sea salt shower scrub rub ($12.95).

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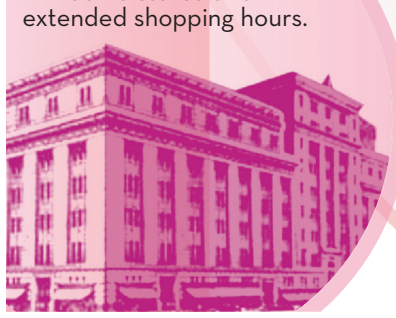
Alleen's Window & Wall Coverings
Bell World
Canadian Traditions
Carlton Cards
China King
Cinnabon
College Cleaners
DeBoer's Furniture
Down Under
Duck
Fit For Life
Fragments Jewellers
Great Canadian News
Great Steak & Potato Company
Kentucky Fried Chicken
La Main D'or Salon & Spa
Lettuce Eatery
Made In Japan
Mega Wraps
Metro
MPS Hi-Tech Massage Centre
NeoLook
Perfume Boutique
Richtree Market Restaurant
Sushi on the Run
Taco Bell
Thai Bowl
Tim Hortons
Timothy's World Coffees
Toothworks – College Park Dental
Treats
Urban Brick
Winners

Shopping Hours
Weekdays: 10 am to 6 pm - Saturday 11 am to 6 pm

Direct TTC subway access from College Subway Station. Some stores offer extended shopping hours.



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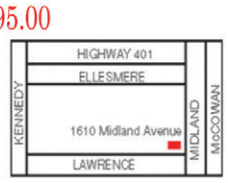


What's open
Some shopping centres will be open on Monday, including the Toronto Eaton Centre, The Bay at Yonge and Queen streets and the Distillery Historic District. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Family Fun

For the love of dance

Youth Outreach Understanding, the National Ballet of Canada and Canada's National Ballet School are offering a program aimed at introducing youth (grades 4 to 6) to classical ballet through performances and workshops. Feb. 16, from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. At the Walter Carsen Centre for the National Ballet of Canada, 470 Queens Quay W. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Overnight sensation

Science Centre sleepover puts focus on astronomy

LEYLA EMORY
for Metro Canada

ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE PHOTOS

Last year's sleepover at the Ontario Science Centre was a success. Organizers are expecting this weekend's "Cosmic Quest" — which takes place on Feb. 14 — to be just as popular.

What's better than a day at the Science Centre? A night at the Science Centre.

Twice a year the Ontario Science Centre invites the general public to spend the night. "Usually our sleepovers are for scouts, guides, school groups etc., but this year we have one on Feb. 14," says Christine Crosby, media relations officer for the Ontario Science Centre. "So it's a special treat for the public."

Starting at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, up to 750 kids of all ages, and their sleeping bags, will trickle into the building at 770 Don Mills Rd. By 5:30 p.m., this year's "Cosmic Quest" is set to begin.

> **"They'll be learning about the sky, including constellations."** Angie Aucoin

"Because 2009 is the international year of astronomy, they'll be learning about the sky, including constellations, the solar system and how rockets fly," says Angie Aucoin, acting manager of recreational and family experiences.

They'll be flying high as they travel through the solar system, sling-shot a space probe and check out the moon from a rocket chair ... no mind-altering substances necessary. This party comes with the good clean fun of the Imax film Roving Mars and a one-hour hands-on science workshop.

Once everyone has carved out a corner to crash (actually sleeping areas are assigned by staff), it's time to get ready to rock. "The DJ/PJ party is new for this year and the girls are just loving it," says Aucoin. "I'm not sure about the adults. We get them really hyped before bedtime but it's nice because they burn off that steam and then (it's) time for bed."

It's lights out at midnight, and a warm breakfast is served at 9 a.m.

While the average age of participants is between five and 16, "a parent has to come along," says Aucoin. "It's fun for the adults as well though ... the Science Centre engages all ages." There has to be a ratio of at least one adult per eight children.

Other than the obligatory adult (19+), kids should come equipped with sleeping bag, pillow and the standard slumber party necessities. But also remember to dress in layers, says Aucoin. "Depending on where they are, it can be cool or warm. We tell them PJs instead of a night-shirt and maybe something to cuddle with."

All this fun comes at a cost of $54 per person, which also gets you admission to the Science Centre the following day. Pre-registration is required but don't worry, if you missed out this time, you can still attend the May 2 event.

Spending quality time with family need not be expensive

LEYLA EMORY
for Metro Canada

If the best things in life are free, then family fun should be dirt-cheap. And it can be.

"Parents need to take hold of all the opportunities around them and make them fun," says Helen Ward, president of Kids First Parents Association of Canada. "If there's snow on the ground, then go sliding down a hill," she says. "If you can't afford a toboggan, use a plastic bag."

Kids are great at using their imaginations and parents need to be too. "In addition to making snowmen, get your water guns out, fill them with some colouring and make drawings in the snow," says Jane Muller, editor of CityParent.com, a website devoted to articles, forums and events for parents in the GTA. "But don't use yellow."

The Canadian outdoors offers a wealth of rides that outdoes any $60-a-day amusement park. "I really advocate getting into nature," Muller says. "Go for a walk at the kids' pace. Let them puddle around in a stream or climb a tree." Muller suggests visiting the local skating rink or wading pool.

Cities also offer a variety of inexpensive or free activities. You just have to know where to find them. "Even your community newspaper is a good source," says Muller. "Dig into those pages and there will be some sort of community calendar of local events."

> **"Use something you already have to have some fun."** Jane Muller

To avoid parking costs, take public transit, says Ward. "Little kids love being on the bus. They can look out the window, ring the bell and talk with other passengers." And always bring snacks. Food is often more expensive than the price of admission.

But not all fun has to take place outside the home. "Use something you already own to have some fun," says Muller. "If you own a video recorder, a fun family project can be making home movies."

Video games are also a relatively inexpensive way to spend time with family. "You can amortize some of these video games over a long period of time and there's lots of repeated play," says Debbie Gordon, a parenting and online safety educator. "We're saving a lot of money by not spending $100 on going to a movie." Instead, the Gordons spend many of their Friday nights playing golf or Lips, a karaoke-like game, on their Xbox 360.

"It's really great family time," Gordon says. "I think we have to redefine in 2009 what qualifies as family time. It's not good or bad, it's the reality of our culture."

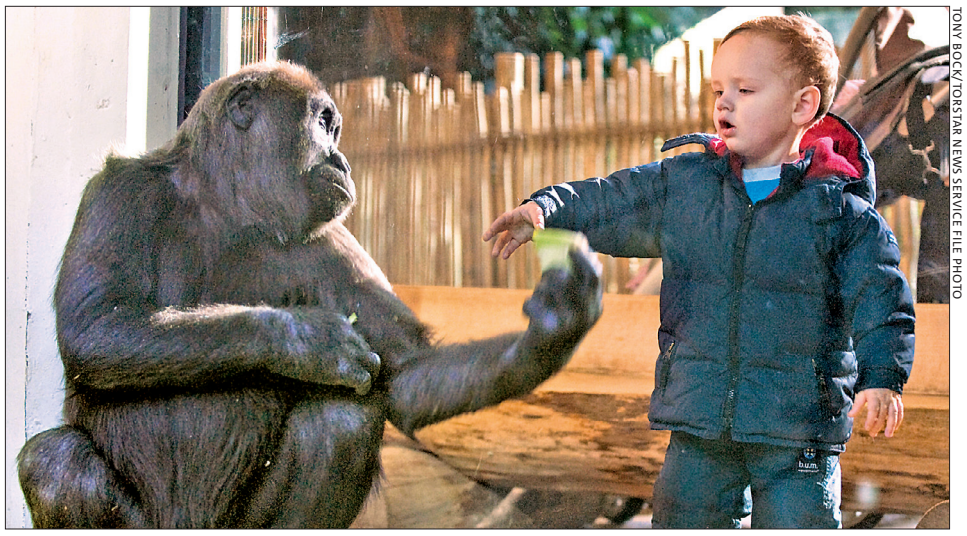
View from the sky
Families can save up to 30 per cent ($65 for four; includes tax) when they rocket to the top of the CN Tower on Feb. 13-16, from 9 a.m.-10 p.m. A free puzzle goes to the first 50 Family Pass ticket buyers each day. For more, go to cntower.ca or call 416-868-6937. METRO NEWS SERVICES

events

FAMILY DAY AT THE TORONTO ZOO Enjoy special keeper talks, visit the indoor pavilion exhibits, more. Half-price admission Feb. 13-16 ($6-$10), from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Go to torontozoo.com/SpecialEvents/ for more.

CINDERELLA DAYS Features special storytelling sessions with Catherine Kentridge, arts & crafts, more. Feb. 16, from 1:30 to 4 p.m; storytelling sessions at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. (adults $12/seniors $10/students $6/children 5-17, $4/children under 5 free). Drop-in crafts from noon to 4 p.m. At the Bata Shoe Museum. Go to batashoemuseum.ca or call 416-979-7799 for more.

Families can bake cookies in the historic kitchen at Campbell House this weekend.



TONY BOCK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO

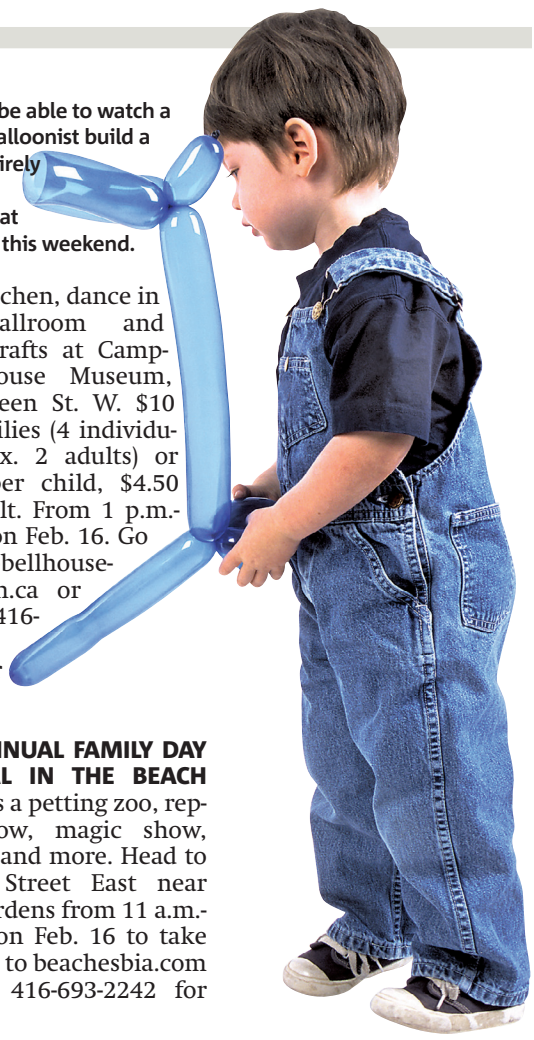
There is plenty to see at The Toronto Zoo, which is offering half-price admission all weekend.

LEAFS SKATE FOR EASTER SEALS The Toronto Maple Leafs hit the ice in support of Easter Seals Ontario at the Air Canada Centre on Feb. 16, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Participants get the chance to skate with the team in five 45-minute sessions throughout the day. Each skater receives a gift bag with two autographed TML player photos and a complimentary lunch courtesy of Mr. Greek. All skaters must fundraise for the event or pay $100 to skate. Those who wish to watch can purchase $25 spectator tickets. For more, go to easterseals.org or call 416-421-8377.

HERITAGE ANTIQUE MARKET This one-day sale and antique show features more than 70 retailers from Quebec and Ontario. At Bayview Village Shopping Centre on Feb. 16, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. For more, call 416-483-6471 or visit heritageantiqueshows.com/Site/Heritage Antique Market - Bayview Village.html

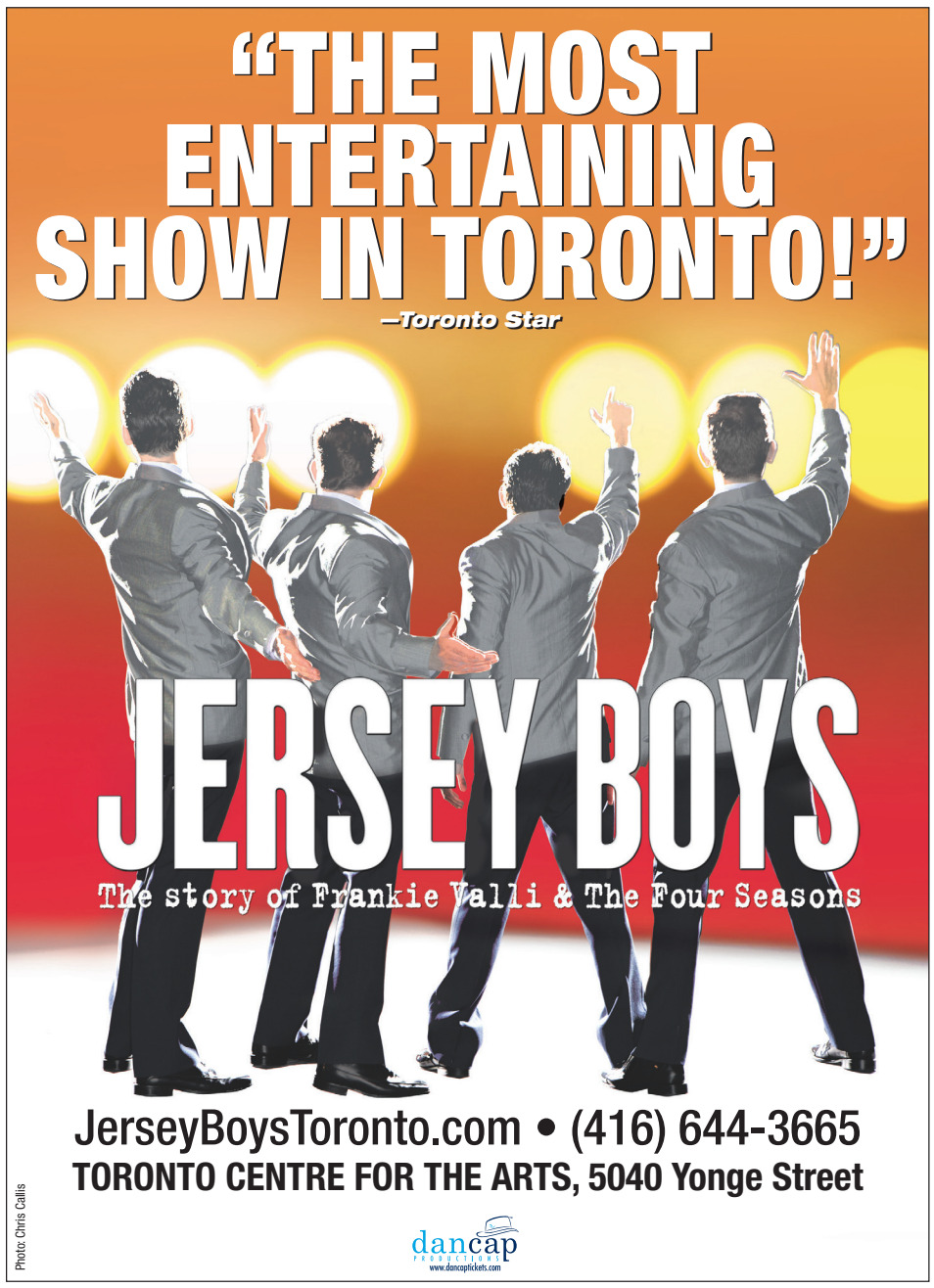
ROMkids FAMILY DAY LONG WEEKEND Features hands-on crafts and activities for the whole family. Also features master balloonist Mark Verge, who will create a full-sized T-Rex skeleton completely out of balloons. Runs Feb. 14-16, from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Free with regular admission. For more, visit rom.on.ca, call 416-586-8000 or email info@rom.on.ca.

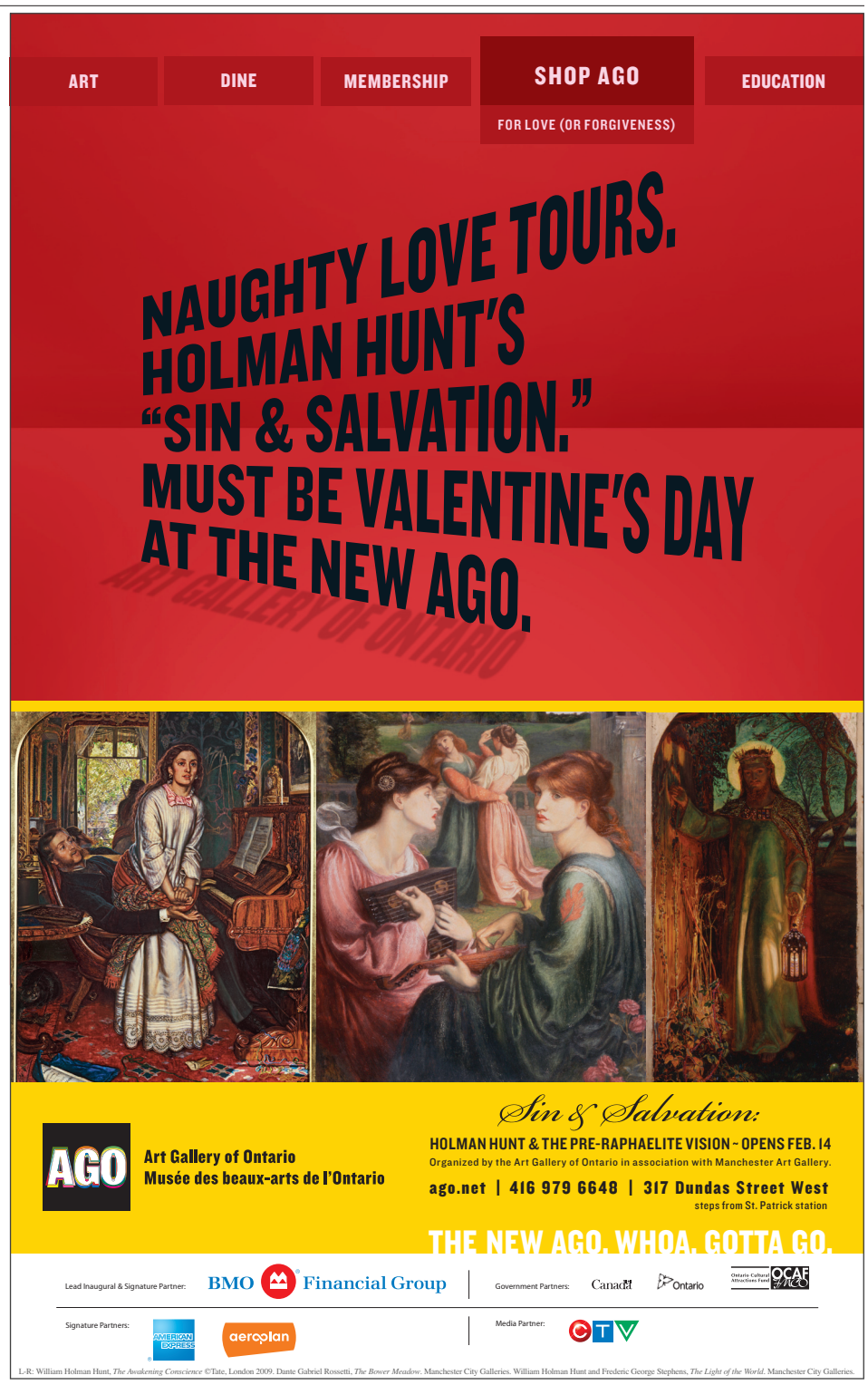
DANCE, COOK AND PLAY Bake cookies in the historic kitchen, dance in the ballroom and make crafts at Campbell House Museum, 160 Queen St. W. $10 for families (4 individuals, max. 2 adults) or $2.50 per child, $4.50 per adult. From 1 p.m.-4 p.m. on Feb. 16. Go to campbellhouse-museum.ca or call 416-597-0227 for more.



Kids will be able to watch a master balloonist build a T-Rex entirely out of balloons at the ROM this weekend.

2ND ANNUAL FAMILY DAY FESTIVAL IN THE BEACH Features a petting zoo, reptile show, magic show, skating and more. Head to Queen Street East near Kew Gardens from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Feb. 16 to take part. Go to beachesbia.com or call 416-693-2242 for more.





What's closed
Liquor stores, banks, libraries, most malls and grocery stores and schools will be closed on Monday. METRO NEWS SERVICES

MARK DADSWELL/GETTY IMAGES

Take your kids skiing on Family Day — Earl Bales Park is offering two- and four-hour passes.

events

FAMILY DAYS AT COLBORNE LODGE Kids can pretend to be a member of High Park founders John and Jemima Howard's 1870s household while taking a tour through the house. Afterwards, they prepare their own cookie and play with 19th-century toys (Tickets, excluding GST: adults, $5.71/seniors & students, $2.59/children, $2.36). Runs Feb. 14-15, from noon to 4 p.m. at Colborne Lodge in High Park. For more, call 416-392-6916.

FAMILY DAY AT FORT YORK Drop in for a tour of the Fort and a cup of old-fashioned hot chocolate from the historic kitchen. Feb. 16, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (Tickets, excluding GST: adults, $7.62/seniors & youth, $3.81/children, $2.83/children 5 and under, free). At Fort York, 100 Garrison Rd. For more, call 416-392-6907.

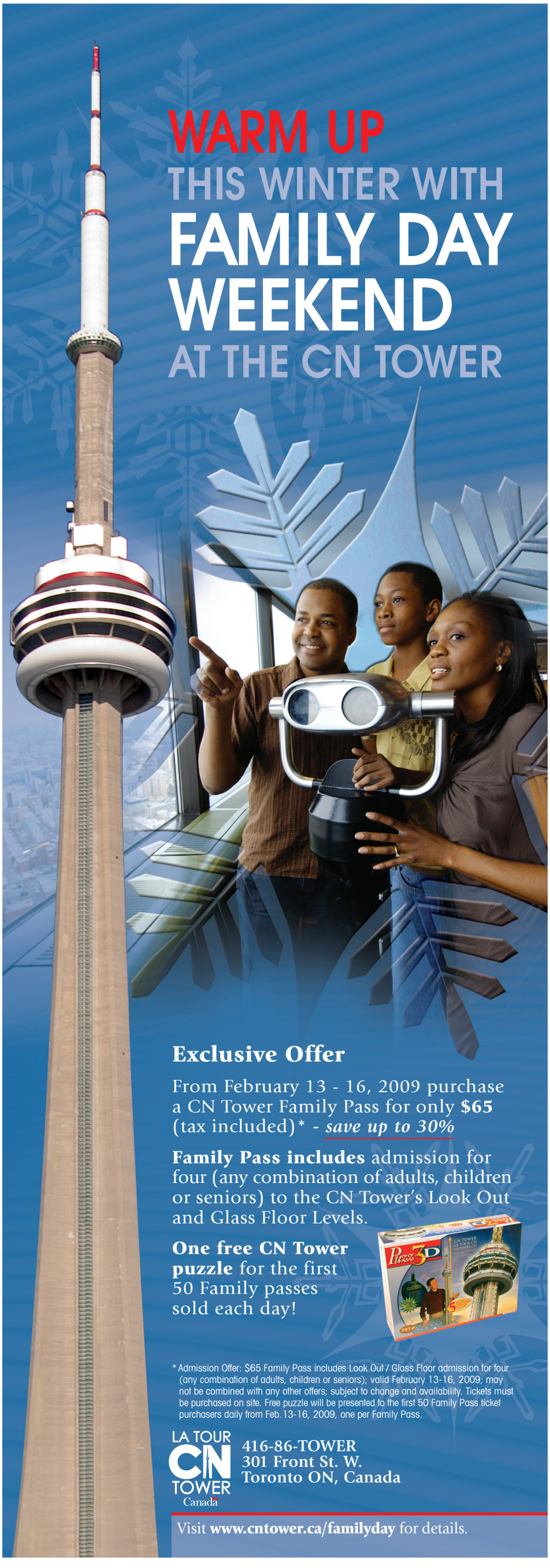
DISCOVERY DROP-IN Head to the historic kitchen at Gibson House for hot chocolate and baked goods. Experience hands-on activities in the Discovery Gallery and make a craft to take home. (Tickets, excluding GST: adults, $5.48/seniors & students, $3.10/children, $2.62. Children must be accompanied by an adult.) Feb. 16, from noon to 4 p.m. at Gibson House, 5172 Yonge St. Call 416-395-7432 for more.

COSMIC QUEST SLEEPOVER Grab your sleeping bag and head over to the Science Centre for a family sleepover on Feb. 14-15. Participants will get to bunk down among the exhibits. Also features science workshops, special shows and a hot breakfast. Admission to the Science Centre for the following day is included. $54 per person. Check in is at 4:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required. For more, go to OntarioScienceCentre.ca/sleepovers

FAMILY DAY AT RIVERWOOD Learn about the animals that live in the conservancy, make crafts for the birds and walk the Scotts Canada Bird Trek. At Riverwood (Public Garden Park), 4300 Riverwood Park Lane, Mississauga. Runs Feb. 14-16, from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

FAMILY DAY ON THE SLOPES Earl Bales Park is open on Family Day for skiing and snowboarding. Adults, $22 (all day), $19 (4 hours), $14 (2 hours); youth/seniors, $19 (all day), $16 (4 hours), $11 (2 hours). Night passes (4 to 8 p.m.) are only $18 for adults and free for up to 2 children (18 or younger). Feb. 16, from 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. At Earl Bales Park, on Bathurst Street, south of Sheppard Avenue.

CHATTERBOX CELEBRATION Casa Loma is teaming up with Chatterbox Games for a Family Day event filled with activities, games and prizes. Parenting expert and author Ann Douglas will be on hand for a meet and greet. Free with admission (adults, $17; seniors/youth, $11; children, $9.25). Feb. 16, from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. At Casa Loma, 1 Austin Terr.
METRO NEWS SERVICES



More online
For more home and condo news and columns, check metronews.ca/toronto/life/househome.

Metro Homes

More price drops

Contractors' selling prices for new homes declined 0.1 per cent between November and December, their third straight monthly decrease, according to Statistics Canada.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Green key colour at IDS '09

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

The white stuff may keep soldiering on outside, but inside, Canadian designers are painting it green.

Focusing on natural materials and environmental sustainability was a common undercurrent among exhibitors of the domestically focused Studio North collection of exhibits at the 2009 Interior Design Show, which wrapped up in Toronto on Sunday.

Co-founders of Toronto's Bookhou, John Booth and Arounna Khounnoraj, displayed their latest furniture and decorative products at the show. The pair uses wood as the primary material in their simple but nongarish pieces.

Booth said they're not motivated by design's eco-movement, but that the choice to use wood relates to their organic design process he said is incompatible with other, less flexible materials. "It's like a drawing. I put a line down and I react to that line. And then I do another one … I'm interested in form and structure and how you can take a standardized process and incorporate variability into it."

Alicia Cornwell and Tony Bevilacqua are similarly inclined toward varying the norm. The sole Studio North exhibitors from the United States are the co-founders of Boston's Chroma Lab, which takes used furniture from second hand stores and furniture dealers and refurbishes it. But while Bookhou is concerned with composition, Chroma Lab cares about colour.

BRIAN BOULTON/FOR METRO CANADA

Shown here is the Bookhou Sled Table No. 1 exhibited at the Interior Design Show.

"Colour is our favourite thing," said Cornwell. "If (a found item) has a nice shape and we think we can modernize it with colour, then that's what we do."

While coating a telephone table in sharp yellow or dresser with an ocean wave-like blue gradient may seem appropriate for spring and summer, Cornwell said it's particularly necessary during darker days when grey weather spurs the blues.

"Your house doesn't have a season. You have to live in it all the time." Alicia Cornwell

"Especially like in Boston or Canada where it's very dull for half the year and the winter kills everything green, you just need something to come home to that's nice, warm, friendly and happy. Your house doesn't have a season. You have to live in it all the time."

Like Chroma Lab aims to lighten a bleak climate, the Toronto-based design team of Hilary Dennis and Katy Chan tries to illuminate eco-friendly products with their less than two-year-old line Schoolyard.

"Our patterns are really fresh and people like to see things that are environmentally friendly that aren't only brown and made of hemp," said Dennis.

Emphasizing nature prints like acorns and oak leaves, Schoolyard uses silk-screening on textiles and paper, creating items from tea towels and drinking glasses to pajamas and underwear with an aim of leaving the smallest environmental footprint.

"We don't want to make more things that impact the world," said Dennis. "We would like to create, but we just have to do it responsibly."

PHOTO SUBMITTED

BRIAN BOULTON/FOR METRO CANADA

Top: A design by Chroma Lab. Below: A design by Schoolyard.

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The Highland	13207	1,932	~~$318,990~~	$299,990	$19,000
The Rouge	13502	2,200	~~$328,990~~	$309,990	$19,000
SEMIS	**LOT#**	**SQ. FT.**	**PREV. PRICE**	**PRICE NOW**	**SAVINGS**
The Malvern	22L	2,556	~~$421,690~~	$397,990	$23,700
The Malvern	22R	2,556	~~$421,690~~	$397,990	$23,700
The Malvern	24R	2,556	~~$421,690~~	$397,990	$23,700
The Malvern	26L	2,556	~~$421,690~~	$397,990	$23,700
The Malvern	27L	2,556	~~$421,690~~	$390,990	$30,700
The Regent	4L	2,577	~~$422,790~~	$399,990	$22,800
The Regent	6L	2,577	~~$422,790~~	$399,990	$22,800

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Decor

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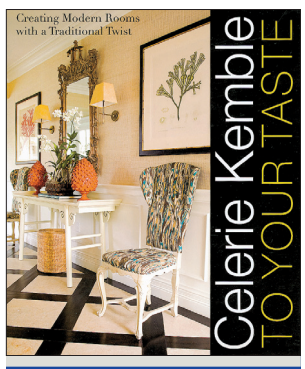

Book pick

Combining classical, whimsical and eclectic

HOME LIBRARY To Your Taste by Celerie Kemble, $52, Clarkson Potter, hardcover, 256 pages. Kemble, an American design rebel, takes a classical approach and adds a touch of whimsy and eclecticism to create her signature look. Learn how to find your personal style, what to look for when buying new furniture (and why custom pieces are worth it), how to build up the courage to include bold colour in your home, and mix your current pieces with new items. Full of excellent photos and advice.

— JENN HOULIHAN

Object of desire

Shed some light with a bargain-priced beauty

HOME & STYLE Classic form and an antique-brass finish belie this beauty's bargain price tag. Hampton Bay Designer Edition lamp $99, The Home Depot, 800-628-0525; homedepot.ca. — BRETT WALTHER

On the contrary!

Designer Celerie Kemble offers advice on breaking the rules

American designer Celerie Kemble isn't afraid to break a few rules — in fact, she encourages it. So we asked the decor recalcitrant to shatter some small-space illusions:

• Forget about attempting to make your small room seem larger. Embrace its cosy proportions. "Just make it the most fun, stylish room possible," says Celerie.

• Prints are not faux pas in a petite room. Multiple prints, however, can create headaches — literally. So if a certain toile is calling your name, go for it, but be sure to limit yourself to that one pattern.

• Don't edit out key pieces in order to save space. "I'd much rather see a small room fully furnished than decked out with an oversize chair in place of, say, a loveseat and chair," says Celerie.

"A room still has to be livable, so include all the critical elements — just scale them down to petite sizes."

• No, you don't need to purge all of your objets. "The spirit of a room is in the details," she says. "Small spaces that are devoid of personal objects can become sterile." Simply group items as a collection and contain them in one or two locations.

— LIZA FINLAY

DON FREEDMAN

Celerie Kemble, below, and an entryway she designed, left.

TRAVIS ROOZEE/REPRINTED FROM CELERIE KEMBLE: TO YOUR TASTE

We love it! Style at Home's editors sing the praises of the occasional chair

Susan Rogers, art director: "How can you go wrong with a classic shape and upholstery in a fresh, clean colour?" Italian in sensa microfibre in blue $589, Chair Source, chair source.ca.

Lauren Flanagan, assistant design editor: "A few of these chairs would look great around a kitchen table." Tobias transparent polycarbonate and chrome-plated steel $120, Ikea, ikea.ca.

Lauren McPhillips, senior editor: "This beauty would steal the spotlight at any cocktail party." Overlapping Squares solid wood $249, cushion in white cotton twill $37, West Elm, westelm.com.

Margot Austin, senior design editor: "It has a small footprint, sculptural curves, luscious velvet upholstery and an identical mate — all key attributes of a great occasional chair." Antique Art Deco in rust velvet, $500, Odessa Antique Show, Smiths Falls, Ont., 613-283-5270.

Jenn Houlihan, assistant editor: "Perfect in my bedroom, as a guest chair in my living room or a spare seat in the dining room." Décor in Current Tranquil $699, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca.

— PRODUCED BY BRETT WALTHER

MICHAEL GRAY/DON (OVERLAPPING SQUARES, ART DECO); CRATE AND BARREL (DÉCOR)

Picking the perfect multi-tasking desk for an apartment

Q I need a home office space in my apartment, but I don't have a separate room for it. Do you have any suggestions for a desk that would work but isn't too officey looking?
— Sophie Henry, Toronto

A I'm a big fan of writing desks. They've really made a comeback thanks to the widespread use of notebook computers. One of my faves is the Parsons two-drawer model from West Elm, right. It's affordable and chic, and will do double or triple duty in any small space.

It's a great entryway piece, since you can stash keys, a cellphone and gloves in the drawers, but it could also act as a sideboard in a dining room. Or use it as a bedside table and tuck a pretty stool underneath.

If you're going to spend long periods of time at the desk, choose an ergonomic chair with wheels instead of a stool.

You may also want to invest in Wi-Fi and a wireless printer. That way you could keep the modem and printer out of sight in a closet so they don't clutter your living space.

— Margot Austin, senior design editor, Style at Home

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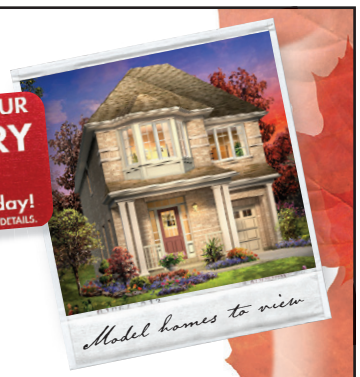

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The Canyon (Deep Lot)	Lot 4603	A	2,094	4	~~$374,990~~	$349,990	$30,000
The Canyon	Lot 4302	A	2,094	4	~~$366,990~~	$339,990	$27,000
The Canyon	Lot 4303	A	2,094	4	~~$366,990~~	$339,990	$27,000
The Canyon	Lot 4403	A	2,094	4	~~$366,990~~	$349,990	$17,000
The Seascape	Lot 4304	A	2,082	4	~~$366,990~~	$339,990	$27,000
The Seascape	Lot 4404	A	2,082	4	~~$366,990~~	$349,990	$17,000

SINGLES	LOT#	ELEV	SQ. FT.	BDRM	PREV. PRICE	PRICE NOW	SAVINGS
The Chrysalis	Lot 10	A	2,406	4	~~$509,990~~	$479,990	$30,000

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From homestead to lovestead

Inviting beds and deep reds top ways to set up your home for the big day

HomeScape

Sylvia Putz

metronews.ca/homescape

To help us celebrate romance, that wonderfully ardent emotional attachment we get when we are in love, we count on Valentine's Day. It often means a fancy meal at home with flowers and chocolates, or in a restaurant, complete with a beautifully set table, candles and a sweet desert to symbolize the sweetness you feel for that special someone.

But what happens on the day after Valentine's day? Or after 20 years of marriage? Does romantic love fade away or get lost in the rush of daily living? It certainly can, but it doesn't have to. Romance should be a state of mind, something we strive for in a small way every day.

Decor in your home is one way to emphasize romance throughout the year. Remember that romance has a lot to do with the senses: Smell, taste, what you see, what you hear, and what you touch. So think about décor in the same way.

Romantic decor speaks to the senses, but it's also about introducing warmth and sensuality into your décor. A clean minimalist look with hard edges and surfacing is not romantic, while lots of draped fabric and curved spaces adds warmth and a nod to the human enjoyment of the sensual. For example, throws, pillows and blankets of rich textures, such as a thick brocade, a nubby linen or velvet, look and feel romantic; they invite you to touch. In fact, anything that feels glorious against naked skin is pretty sensual, like a faux fur rug in front of a fireplace, for example.

Draped fabric in deep hues can bring some romance home.

Deep colours that radiate warmth, such as reds, rich purples, deep oranges and browns are warm and inviting. Metal fixtures in a coppery, bronzed or gold colour work better than stainless steel and silver chromed finishes. Red and pink are of course also associated with Valentine's day, and no wonder. These colours symbolize true love that comes from the heart. Pink is also hot for similar reasons, but also because it speaks to flushes, cheeks, lips — you get the idea.

And while we're speaking of these things, consider the bedroom. The bed is usually the focus of this room, but if you want romance, use lots of fabric and make the bed as inviting as you can. Hanging sheer fabric from the rails of a four-poster bed emphasizes the bed in a lovely way. A coronet canopy (curtains of fabric usually drawn back over a fabric backboard) of a thick, luxurious brocade at the head of the bed has a similar effect. Shirred fabric panels installed over the ceiling or on a wall is another way to introduce warmth and softness.

Valentine's Day

Fireplaces are romantic in any room, and candles do the same thing. They add that delicious warmth and orangey-yellow light that is so flattering. Flowers are also romantic, for the simple reason that they are beautiful to behold and they can smell heavenly. Scented candles with a delicate scent (not too overpowering please) can add a romantic touch, as can soft and relaxing music. The occasional small chocolate treat to pleasure the tongue is never unwelcome by most people I know.

Finally, I want to wish you all a wonderful Valentine's Day, and remember to keep those romantic feelings flowing throughout the year!

Sylvia Putz is a journalist with an interest in decor and design. She's written for the TV show Arresting Design; sputz@arrestingdesign.com.

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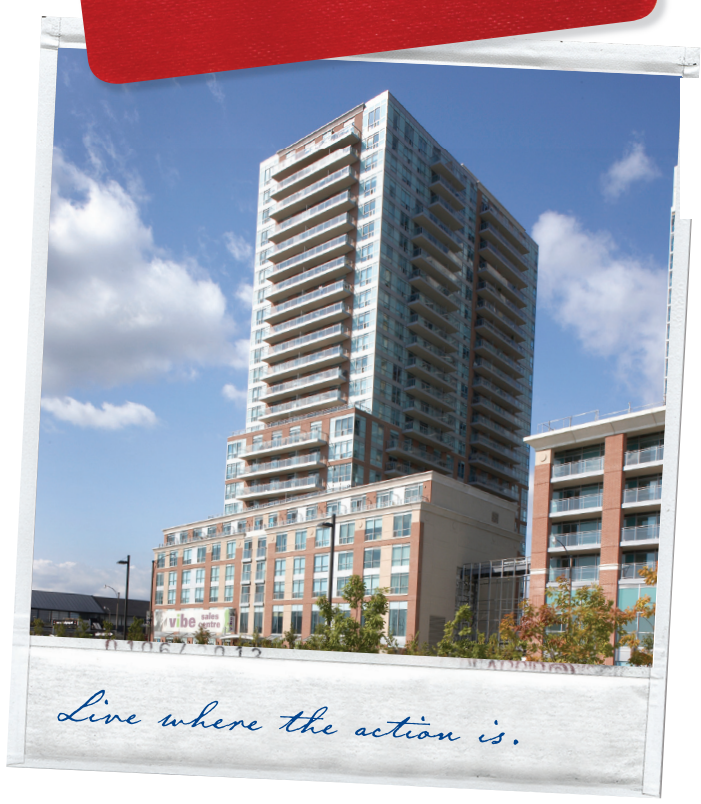

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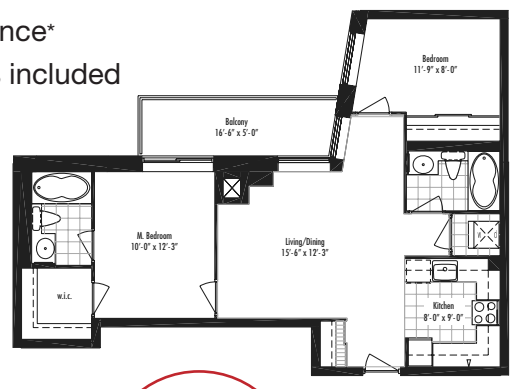

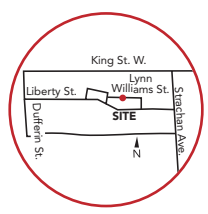

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Apple-green accents pepper the dark walnut tones of most of the Aspen Ridges' Scenic model suite.

Aspen Ridges offers organic experience

Suite Talk

VANESSA GRECO
for Metro Canada

With rooms awash in dark wood tones and apple-green accents, Aspen Ridges' Scenic condominium suites at Leslie and Eglinton are bringing the outside in.

Taking cues from the 900 acres of parkland surrounding the property, designer Mike Niven of Mike Niven Interior Design Inc. set off to create an organic suite experience, mimicking the great outdoors.

"Most of the living area is oriented towards the best view from the building," he said. "We're making reference to that greenery in a contemporary way."

All furniture is designed in a bench-made block style creating a look that is rugged without being rough. Much of the natural wood furniture is oiled instead of being lacquered, for an authentic outdoorsy feel.

Modern pieces, such as bone-white barstools at the kitchen counter, mingle with dark walnut brown cabinets. The rich shade of brown is present throughout the suite.

"We took everything down to its simplest form — even the green accents," said Niven. "Real scenery is many shades of muted green. But we picked one bold green."

Sheer curtains and frosted glass doors allow natural light to filter into adjoining rooms. But even the suite's light fixtures are a subtle nod to nature.

Sheer curtains allow natural light to filter into Aspen Ridges' Scenic condominium model suite.

Above the kitchen table, a modern chandelier's silver boughs branch out, meant to look like the top of a tree. The fixture ties-in cleverly, without looking too literal.

"We're blending Italian modernism with nature," said Niven, who designed the suite for an older urban-minded crowd.

Other features include nine-foot ceilings and a tiled spa washroom with floating vanity. As well, Niven has designed a "living wall" of plants along the Scenic's lobby staircase.

Suites at the Scenic range from 590 to 1,400 square feet. Expect to pay anywhere from $210,000 to over $700,000. Parking is included with each suite.

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New Homes

Homebuyers Valentine's

TheHunt

Amit Paul
amitp@rogers.com

As men across our wonderful city scramble for roses and candy before Saturday dawns you may hear the water-cooler talk that Valentine's Day is nothing but a farce drummed up by retailers to coerce spending. At the same time Valentine's patriots will remind you that the holiday is believed to have its roots in ancient Christian and Roman tradition, and celebrates a man of God who put love above even the Church. As is often the case the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Much the same can be said about this buyer's market. Is it really all it's cracked up to be? Has the market's condition deviated so much that homes are dropping $50,000 to $100,000 in fire sale desperation? These are the questions on the minds of many GTA residents as 2009 plods along to a predictably slow start. Allow me to try and shed some light on these conundrums.

A home in the Queen West area, in late 2007-early 2008, was listed at approximately $525,000. It was on the market for over three months and failed to sell. The property was taken off the market. It then sold in very late 2008 for around $415,000. Is this a drop in value of $100,000? No. Analysis shows that two years ago the home's reasonable market value was between $435,000 and $450,000. With homes securing record high prices, if the property had been marketed best, conceivably it could have achieved as high as $475,000. What this buyer's market deprived that home wasn't an extra $100,000 of value, it was at most $35,000 of value. But the most serious detriment came in the form of a cold buyer pulse; the potential to achieve so much more than reasonable market price, or a record high price. Effectively the cold market robbed the owners of arguably $25,000, in addition to the $35,000 tail off in market.

A condo in North York, near Yonge and 401, recently sold for $275,000. Last year the exact same unit type in the same building sold for just over $300,000. Analysis shows that fair market value, prior to our economic struggles, was in the area of $290,000. Now other factors such as floor, finishes, upgrades, cleanliness, etc., will routinely play factors in the eventual sale of any condo, but in this case most factors were comparable. Therefore, in this instance, the condo did sell at $15,000, at least, less than what it would have likely sold for in 2007-2008.

A colleague of mine brought to my attention last week a home in Forest Hill listed at $2.4 million. Two years ago the same home was listed for $2.7 million. Upon further review I realized that even in our previously boiling market that home would not have secured more than $2.4 million. This is a perfect example of a property that was hoping to ride the good times into the sunset, and find gold at the end of the rainbow.

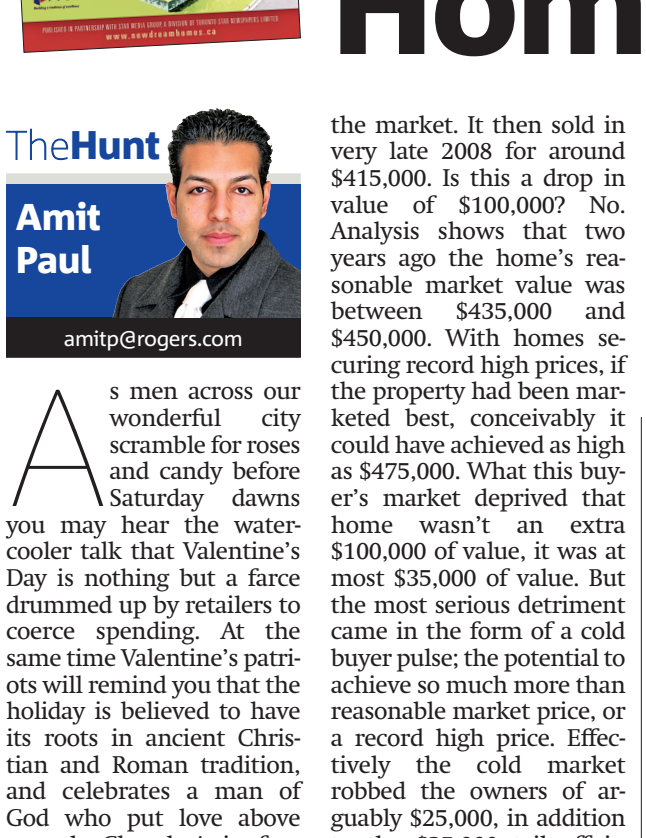
The problem for this home is that it's now priced too high given our current market. In this instance the property may be deprived up to $100,000, but time will tell the tale.

I've chosen these three examples to illustrate two main points. No.1: There are no golden rules of thumb you can or should follow in this new market. No. 2: Despite some blown out of proportion stories out there, facts and figures don't lie, and the facts do show that prices have come down, in many cases significantly, across the board.

Happy Valentine's Day and happy hunting.

Amit is a Realtor/Developer with Re/Max. amitp@rogers.com

Valentine'sDay



Much like the current buyer's market, the truth about Valentine's Day isn't as good, or bad, as what you may have heard.

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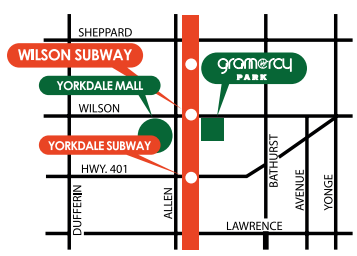

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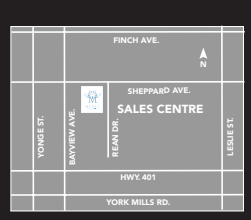

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Have a noisy neighbour?

LegalMatters

Jeffrey D. Cowan
jeff@cowanandtaylor.com

Q I live in a large condominium building and enjoy my closeness to the subway and amenities but I find that the close proximity of my neighbours is posing a bit of a problem with the enjoyment of my living space. In particular, my upstairs neighbours tend to play their music quite loudly and have an alternate living schedule that leads to heavy footsteps late at night and loud music (like they're getting ready to go out clubbing). What is my recourse?

A Living in a condominium can be a bit of a compromise. You are still living in a semi-communal situation whereby you live close to one another but still have more immediate rights in terms of ownership than if you were renting. The reality is that in most condominiums there are concierges or managers who will calm down the rowdy parties and you can move on to a restful night of sleep. If however, the situation continues, it will escalate to the board of the condo, which may result in bad blood between you and your neighbour and even louder noise.

We as owners, or even tenants, are entitled to 'quiet enjoyment' of our living abode (in my opinion at most times of day). However, municipal noise offences can only be enforced (unless excessive) after 11 p.m. If you are an early to bed, early to rise type of person, you may find yourself exposed to this type of living arrangement.

If you are tenant, there is the Landlord and Tenant Act which can be of some help but if you are an owner in a condo tower and you seem to be the only resident affected by the noisy neighbour, your fight might be greater.

I find that the most effective way of dealing with a neighbour who is continually breaking the sound barrier after 11 p.m. is to call the police (do not call 911) and make sure that you lodge a complaint. Numerous reports and visits by the police can lead to eviction of the tenant or sanctions by the board of the condo.

Jeffrey D. Cowan is the principal of Cowan & Taylor, Barristers & Solicitors, jeff@cowanandtaylor.com. The information contained in this article should not be relied upon as legal advice.

Heaven on earth
"Chemically speaking, chocolate really is the world's perfect food." -Michael Levine, nutrition researcher, as quoted in The Emperors of Chocolate: Inside the Secret World of Hershey and Mars. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Food

Green & Black's Organic is the world's first organic chocolate brand. Visit greenandblacks.com/us/recipes.html for recipes using their premium chocolate. Metro News Services

How to get it
Available at most major grocery retailers including Sobeys, Metro, Loblaws and Shoppers Drug Mart, the suggested retail price of Green & Black's Organic bars is $3.89

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Love by any other name: Chocolate

À **la** carte

Barb Holland
Metro Food Writer

Ah, Valentine's Day is quickly approaching and to moi, that means a bit of indulgence and, of course, chocolate.

The good news: Yes, there has been a growing body of credible scientific evidence that chocolate contains a host of heart-healthy and mood-enhancing phytochemicals (women know the mood-enhancing part). Cocoa beans are rich in flavanols, natural compounds with antioxidant properties found in red wine, purple grape juice, green tea, cinnamon and dark bittersweet chocolate (to name a few).

However, the more a cocoa bean is processed, the less of these potent flavanols are present. There is a lot of chocolate out there, but the best bang for the nutrition buck is dark chocolate with at least 60 to 70 per cent cocoa.

The not-so-good news: It's an indulgence, yes, but chocolate still has calories and size does matter. Savour and enjoy small quantities of really good quality, delicious chocolate.

Heart Healthier Fudgy Brownies

February is also Heart Month, so in that vein, here is a recipe that satisfies the chocolate-calling voice and is lower in fat and calories. Low fat unsweetened cocoa powder adds a depth of chocolate flavour and ripe banana provides moistness and texture with just a hint of banana flavour.

Valentine's**Day**

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 oz (30 g) good quality bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter
- 1 cup (250 ml) granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) mashed ripe banana (1 large banana)
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) baking powder
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) salt

METHOD:
Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray sides of an 8-inch (20 cm) square baking pan. Line bottom and two sides with parchment paper (to make a parchment paper sling for easy removal).

This recipes satisfies the chocolate craving but is lower in fat.

Combine chocolate and butter in medium glass bowl. Microwave at Medium for 1 minute or until butter is melted. Stir until chocolate is completely melted. Stir in sugar, then mashed banana until blended. Beat in egg and vanilla until smooth.

In a smaller bowl, combine flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt; stir into chocolate mixture until dry ingredients are completely moistened. Spread evenly in prepared pan. Bake 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean.

Cool pan on wire rack 10 minutes. Run spatula around edges, carefully lift parchment paper sling of brownies to wire rack to cool completely. Cut into 16 squares.

Nutritional information per square: Calories: 106; Fat: 2.8 g; Carbohydrate: 20 g; Protein: 1.25 g; Fibre: 1 g.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

Food in brief

BREAKFAST IN BED
From Feb. 13-15, Pantry will serve your loved one a Valentine's Day breakfast in bed to remember — delivered direct to your door. Each Breakfast in Bed Package is individually priced, based on menu selections and delivery area. Prices will range from about $95 to $135 for two. For an additional charge, a discreet professional butler will serve the breakfast and even clean up afterwards! Visit pantry.to for more.

DINING IN THE DARK
Dark Dining, the unique and sensual phenomena that has enchanted diners across Europe, Asia and North America has now arrived in Toronto. Available at Six Steps Restaurant (53-55 Colborne St.) for $125 per person. To reserve a table please contact star@alternaterealityevents.com, or call 647-628-7335. Visit alternaterealityevents.com for details.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Are you currently experiencing
POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION?

Many new mothers experience a brief period of the "postpartum blues" that is considered in the normal range of health and usually ends one week after birth. However, 13% of mothers develop a clinically serious **postpartum depression.**

If you have recently given birth and are experiencing:
- Feeling sad or bouts of crying
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Loss of energy and difficulty concentrating
- Feeling unable to cope

You may have postpartum depression.

If you are interested in participating in research on postpartum depression please call
416.535.8501 x1750

camh
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Billy's Best Bottles
"But did you know that today's fastest growing wine style is dry Rosé? Pink is cool." Read this week's column at metronews.ca

www.newnordic.ca
NEW NORDIC

The Man Who Made the Whole Town Lose Weight

In the small town of Alesund in Norway, many of its residents began eating a common plant that made over 1,500 of them lose weight! It all began in 2006 when a customer of Johnny Pettersen, a local health food store owner, asked him for advice on how to eliminate sugar cravings.

"I gave my customer mulberry leaf tablets because mulberry is known to lower your blood sugar after meals. When blood sugar is stable, sugar cravings disappear. And it worked very well. I started recommending mulberry to many customers and soon noticed that they were losing weight. This made me curious, so I studied the effect of mulberries on blood sugar, insulin and fat burning. Surely enough, because of the effect on blood sugar, mulberry leaves also lead to lower insulin secretion, which makes you able to burn stored fat better and also reduces fat storage from excess calories."

The 10-day diet

When Pettersen increased the dosage, recommending two mulberry tablets before each meal, he found that his customers not only controlled their sugar cravings, but also lost significant amounts of weight.

"I recommended that customers follow the programme for a minimum of 10 days in order to eliminate their need for sugar stimulation. Sugar works as a drug on the brain and people need to eliminate the need for a 'sugar high' if they want to stay slim. Taking mulberry leaves, my customers changed to a healthier diet without even noticing it — they simply didn't crave sugar."

1500 people lost weight

After the success of the first customers, word travelled fast. In the last 12 months Pettersen has worked with over 1,500 customers in Alesund and the surrounding area. He feels that his simple and natural mulberry formula has been a tremendous success.

He concludes, "Once my customers try mulberry leaves, they come back, often with friends and family, and buy several packages. It is rewarding because I see them coming back happy, healthy and slimmer."

MULBERRY - A BREAKTHROUGH!

For centuries, the Japanese culture, which is known for having a long life and a slim, healthy physique, has enjoyed the benefits of mulberry leaves. We now know from clinical studies how mulberry leaves regulate blood sugar levels. For dieters, this means a lower production of insulin after eating carbohydrates. Insulin is responsible for storing excess calories as fat and for shutting down fat burning. Too much insulin is a dieter's worst enemy!

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For more information, please visit www.newnordic.ca or call 1 800 261 4223

LiquidAssets

Peter Rockwell
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Bubbly love

Here's a question for all the guys out there. Are you ready for Valentine's Day? I'm betting most of you aren't. Since it's on a Saturday this year there's no excuse for you not to whip up a little brunch in bed for your sweetie accompanied by a glass of some liquid passion.

For me there's no sexier beverage than sparkling wine. The sad part is that bubbly has such an iconic association with New Year's Eve that it's hard for way too many of you to see it as anything other than a rare occasion sipper.

We should all be drinking them more often if for no reason other than they are super food friendly. Whether Beluga caviar, cheese-smothered nacho chips or a plate of eggs and hash browns; a sparkler's pairing potential is unlimited.

When it comes to romance in a glass nothing beats a fizzy rosé and the easy-drinking **Freixenet Cordon Rosado Brut** ($12.95 - $14.59) from Spain is an inexpensive charmer with a relaxed dry cherry flavour.

If you're all about the fruit Chile's **Fresita** ($14.50 - $18.55) is infused with the essence of real strawberries. It's a candied, red berry bomb that's wildly addictive and screams Happy Valentine's Day.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

Peter Rockwell is the everyman's wine writer, working in the liquor industry for more than 25 years and travelling the globe looking for something to fill his glass and put into words.

Canadian Living magazine is on sale now!

Canadian Living recipe of the month

Turkey Meatball Soup

INGREDIENTS:
- 3 cups (750 ml) sodium-reduced chicken broth
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 1each rib celery and carrot, sliced
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) each pepper and dried thyme
- 1 sweet red pepper, chopped
- 1 cup (250 ml) vermicelli egg noodles
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) frozen peas, thawed

Turkey Meatballs:
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) grated onion
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) minced fresh parsley
- 1/4 tsp)1 ml) each salt and pepper
- 1 lb (500 g) lean ground turkey or veal

METHOD:
Meatballs: In bowl, combine egg, onion, Parmesan cheese, parsley, salt and pepper; mix in turkey. Shape by 1 tbsp (15 ml) into balls. Bake on greased baking sheet in 400°F (200°C) oven until digital thermometer inserted in centre of several reads 165°F (74°C), about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in large saucepan, bring broth and 3 cups (750 ml) water to boil. Add green onions, celery, carrot, pepper and thyme; reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add red pepper, egg noodles and meatballs; simmer, covered, until pasta is al dente, about 5 minutes.

Add peas and heat through.

YVONNE DUIVENVOORDEN PHOTO

For more great recipes, visit metronews.ca.

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Valentine's Day is all about giving
This Friday, Secrets From Your Sister (secretsfromyoursister.com) celebrates its annual Dead Bra Day Sale. Donate one 'dead' bra (must be washed) and receive a 25 per cent discount towards the purchase of a new bra at regular price. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Style

A fragrance that says it all

Send an intimate message to your sweetheart this Valentine's Day with Gapbody's unisex, proactive scent, The Lover ($42). It is a velvety apricot-fused scent with shimmering mint leaf and sexy patchouli notes. The understated, elegant bottle comes inscribed with the fragrance's name and its meaning: "The Lover: 1. An individual who thrives on human connection. 2. A person who desires another. 3. Someone motivated by their heart. 4. One who is consumed with passion." METRO NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

One-shouldered styles are firmly in place

The one-shoulder look has gone from toga to trend in mere months.

Asymmetrical styles were all over the runways during the spring previews and then Michelle Obama, now the first lady of fashion, wore a one-shoulder gown by Jason Wu to the inaugural balls last month.

Cameron Diaz and Sandra Bullock were among those wearing the same silhouette to last month's Golden Globes.

It's a little bit edgy, a little bit avant garde but not outrageous, says designer Nicole Miller, and that gives it long legs as a trend.

"You know how the bubble skirt came out and we all thought it would be a one-season thing — and it wasn't? I think that will happen with the one-shoulder too. I think people are starting to understand them," she says.

Perfecting the look takes patience — and some trial and error — but once you find the right cut, it can be very flattering, Miller says.

Shoshanna Gruss's spring collection has several versions and she has found herself wearing them to cocktail parties and restaurant dinners with friends. "I think of it as a strapless dress, I wouldn't wear it to work or the playground."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

Shoshanna Gruss one-shoulder dress.

The appeal, however, Gruss says, is that it's not strapless: It seems more "daring and interesting," yet you're actually more covered up. Plus, wearing a one-shouldered top doesn't doom you to a day of battle keeping your top up.

"You do have a little more support so you can wear it with a little more confidence," she adds.

Her advice is to pay attention to fit, particularly how the garment is cut under the arm.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paint the town red

Valentine's Day

Besides it being one of spring's hottest emerging colours, throw on a little rouge in celebration of Valentine's day.

METRO NEWS SERVICE

Michael Kors Chronograph watch with a polyurethane wrapped stainless steel bracelet, $235. Available at Michael Kors boutique in Yorkdale Mall.

Synthetic leather purse with heart lock and key charm, Aldo, $45.

Red blouse, Le Chateau, $69.95.

Trench coat, Smart Set, $75.

Printed scarf, Old Navy, $14.50.

Red scoop-neck T-shirt, Smart Set, $14.

Town Shoes label, patent leather $125

Elsa Peretti lacquer bangle, Tiffany & Co., $485,

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Sephora opens at Fairview Mall

Beauty retailer Sephora opens its eighth location in Ontario at Fairview Mall, 1800 Sheppard Ave. E. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Valentine's Day details

Style File

Kim Elbo

kim.elbo@gmail.com

ask kim

How often should I change my bras?

Bras tend to stretch out over time. My tip is to buy a bra that fits perfectly when you hook it to the first of hook fasteners. As the bra stretches hook your bra fasteners to the second or third set of hooks so that the bra will become tighter. La Senza recommends that you replace your bras once every six to eight months and buy white, black and nude bras to interchange with different coloured outfits.

Email your style questions to kim.elbo@gmail.com.

Vancouver's Kim Elbo has a passion for fashion. Here she shares the latest style tips.

Country Lace
Designer: Lily & Jae
Price: bra $40, panties $36
Shop: Hot Box Accessories
hotboxbc.com

Naughty Dots
Designer: Third Floor Designs
Price: bra $48, panties $38
thirdfloordesign.com

Bedroom Mix Up
Designer: Freya
Price: bra $120, panties $65
Shop: Dianes Lingerie
ferrisinternational.ca

Underwear

If you're planning a romantic weekend don't forget the details. What you wear under the dress is just as important as the dress itself. Keep things simple and sweet and match your floral or heart dress with a floral or heart bra and undie set. If you're not into the girly frills of flowers and lace, then ease into something like boy shorts and subdued polka dot patterns.

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Cover girl
Michelle Obama is making history again — by becoming only the second first lady (the first was Hillary Clinton in 1998) to appear on the cover of Vogue magazine. Obama was photographed by Annie Leibovitz for the cover. **PEOPLE.COM**

Entertainment

Most bankable

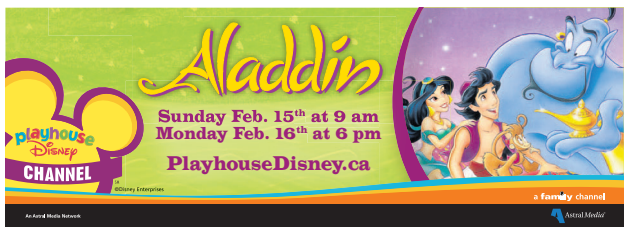
Will Smith has been named the most bankable star in Hollywood. The actor topped Forbes.com's Star Currency list, which ranks stars according to their financial power at the box office. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐 A CLASSIC; 🌐🌐🌐🌐 EXCELLENT; 🌐🌐🌐 GOOD; 🌐🌐 FAIR; 🌐 POOR

Allen is irresistible

New release from Van Morrison, Malajube also out this week



Lily **Allen**

Album: It's Not Me, It's You
Label: Capitol/EMI
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐½

A POTTY-MOUTHED singer with the voice of an innocent school-girl, it's hard not to find Lily Allen appealing. She opens her second album with the dance-grooved Everyone's At It, a surprising condemnation of our pharmaceutical culture. Isn't this the same girl who just last month said cocaine was "no problem?" But it's this conniving flightiness that is so irresistible, especially when she's taking a non-judgmental look at conspicuous consumption (The Fear), discoursing on god (Him), or having a pleasant chat with the former president (F*** You). Lily also has some interesting ideas about sex, actually expecting to receive as much as she gives, both in quantity and quality. It's all right there with a synth-pop-country (yes, that's a banjo) flavour on Not Fair, even more so on the nasty Never Gonna Happen. But Lily does have her tender moments (Who'd Have Known, Chinese) that point to a strong future in this wicked business.

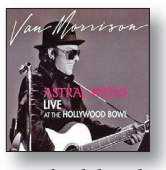
Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

EMI MUSIC PHOTO

It's Not Me, It's You, the second album from British pop star Lily Allen, was released this week.

Van **Morrison**

Album: Astral Weeks Live At The Hollywood Bowl
Label: Listen To The Lion/EMI
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐

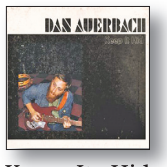


VAN MORRISON'S MYSTIC masterpiece, Astral Weeks, has long been considered a musical landmark. Recorded in 1968, it's swirling vocals, improvisational themes and acoustic virtuosity broke acres of new ground. It was quite unlike anything that came before or after. So why then has Mr. Morrison released a live version? Not to make the lyrics any more clearer. Although his poetry is kindly documented in the liner notes, Morrison's mumble remains impenetrable. He's added a full string section, something he says he wanted on the original but couldn't afford. He avoided rehearsals to recapture the improvisational spirit and even hired Jay Berliner, the man responsible for all those great acoustic guitar runs 41 years ago. Without a doubt, it would have been a truly wonderful thing to experience live. But after the show, you'd still want to hear the original. This live version is close, but no substitute. Which makes you wonder if Morrison released it more for business reasons, than artistic ones.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Dan **Auerbach**

Album: Keep It Hid
Label: Nonesuch Records
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐½



CHOP THE BLACK Keys in half, and quiet ballads head-butt raucous, raw bluesy-rock. Keep It Hid frees singer-guitarist Dan Auerbach from his band's constraints, allowing for Raconteur-ish experiments with layered guitars, upright bass, keyboards, banjos and a crowd of friends and family. Some of the best moments in the album come through transitions between songs. The quiet acoustics of Trouble Weights a Ton contrasts with sludgy rockers like I Want Some More or The Prowl, as Auerbach uses sequence to play with tempo and atmosphere. In one head-nodding progression, mellow burner Keep it Hid butts against the shuffling My Last Mistake before rocketing to When I Left the Room's psychedelia and Street Walkin's Hendrix-influenced stomp. Mash-up!

Rob McMahon/for Metro Canada

Malajube

Album: Labyrinthes
Label: Dare to Care
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐🌐

IT'S RARE TO hear about a Francophone rock band in English Canada, but when you're as good as Montreal's Malajube, there's no such thing as a language barrier. After wowing Canadians with the frenetic Trompe L'oeil, they toured North America to rave reviews and became the best known French-language indie rockers around. Their follow up is nearly as impressive. Harder tunes mixed with infectious bouncy pop numbers and a few extended jams prove that these dudes are no one album wonder.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Music**Reviews**

music@metronews.ca

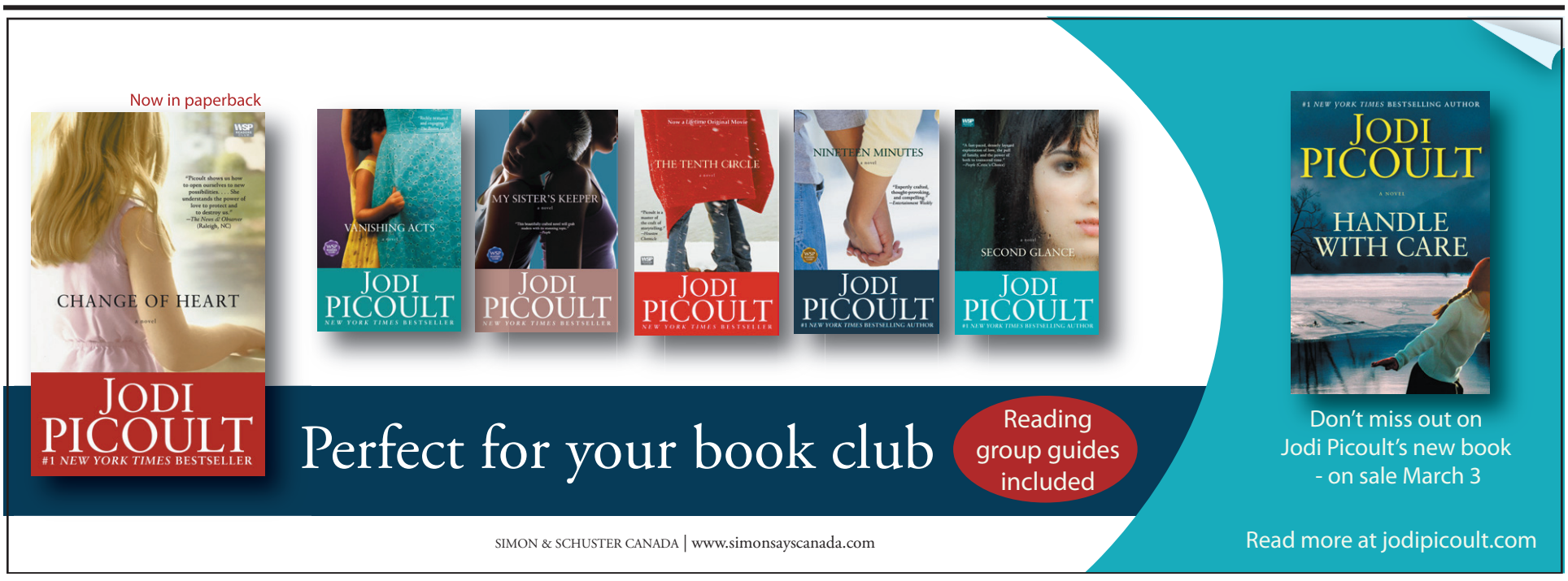
Jason **Bajada**

Album: Lovesh—t
Label: MapleMusic/Universal
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐🌐

JASON BAJADA IS a very special songwriter from Montreal. He's probably the only guy around that can pull off a line like "I'm not quite as horny as you'd like me to be" without drawing howls of derision from his audience. His low-key delivery, with its folk-Floydish accompaniment, lends an innocent quality to these dark tunes without ever pushing them into the realm of naïveté. This album, a collection of lovesick rejection songs, should move him into the realm of fine Canadian craftsmen like Rufus Wainwright and Ron Sexsmith. There's just so many great little nuggets here ("she's genuinely charming and she's nuts"). Watch for the single Ten Days In Miami. Bajada is definitely a man with a hole in his heart.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Listen to this week's reviewed music by following links at metronews.ca/music



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Auerbach loosens up

Black Keys guitarist goes big on solo album

ROB MCMAHON
for Metro Canada

Add Dan Auerbach's name to the list of members of blues-rock duos who go big on solo albums.

While it runs with the same attention to detail and musical traditions as his work with the Black Keys, Auerbach's new disc Keep It Hid punches up sonic contrasts and amasses more instruments and collaborators.

Take dynamics. When sequencing the album, Auerbach wanted songs to butt against one another. The track list set up like an album-focused LP from the '60s or early '70s. As a result, a rocker like I Want Some More unfolds with help from its relationship to predecessor Trouble Weights a Ton.

"I like records that have an ebb and flow — that act like scenes in a movie. I like it when albums start with quiet pieces, to get the music centred and the speakers balanced," he said. "(Album opener) Trouble Weights a Ton is quieter than other tracks, so you need to turn up your speakers to listen, which then makes the next song louder when it hits."

GETTY IMAGES

Keep It Hid, the solo album from The Black Keys guitarist Dan Auerbach, is now available.

Auerbach sees the solo album as an extension of the Keys. Rather than he and drummer Patrick Carney working out songs, he turned to a bigger group, including the uncle who taught him to play guitar and singer Jessica Lea Mayfield. Speaking of a rationale that echoes Jack White's shift from the White Stripes to the Ranconteurs, the idea was to loosen the Keys' self-imposed restrictions.

"I'm not trying to reinvent myself, I just want to work with other people … (and do things) there isn't an opportunity to do with the Black Keys," said Auerbach.

Like family stories passed around at reunions, Auerbach sees music as transferring ideas between generations, reinterpreted at each juncture but consistently referencing the past. For example, Whispered Words, which was written by his father, features guitar, drums, and an upright bass playing live as an homage to Motown.

"Music is grammar, language, and it's passed on, generation to generation," he said. "We played Whispered Words live in the studio, and cut it to mono stereo. I love that, and it's not something the Black Keys could do. We record live, but not live to mono … in the Motown recording style."

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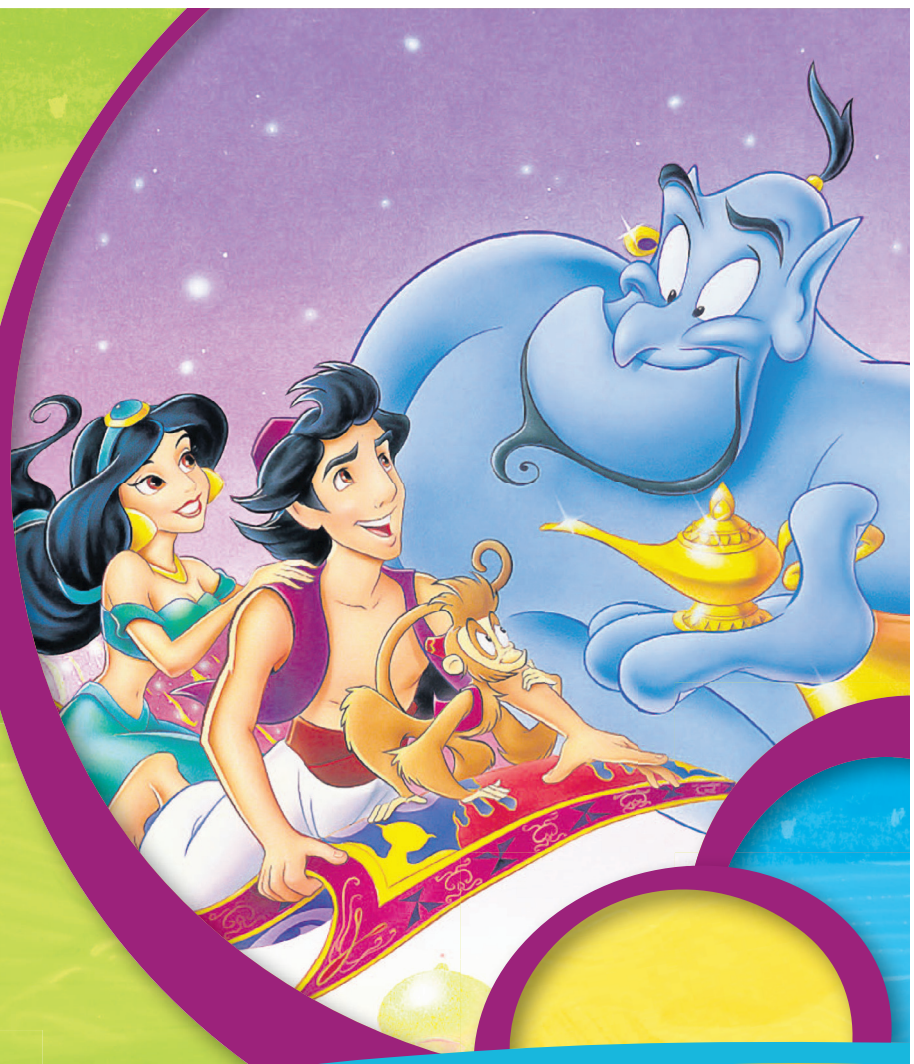

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he's just *not* that into you

In Theatres February 6

ALLIANCE

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No purchase necessary. One entry per person. Contest open to Canadian residents of legal age, excluding residents of Quebec. Contest closes February 10, 2009. Approximate retail value of prize is $599 each. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. For full contest rules and details, visit www.metronews.ca.

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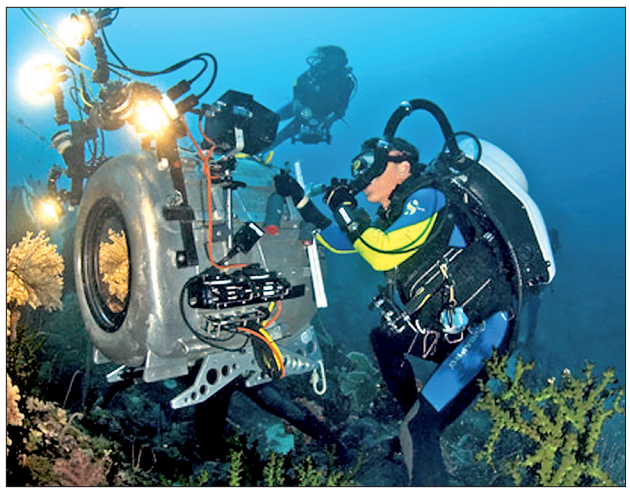
Accused in Travolta case denied lower bail

A judge in the Bahamas has denied a request to lower the bail requirement for an ambulance driver accused of trying to extort $25 million US from actor John Travolta following his son's death. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A scene from IMAX film Under The Sea 3-D.

Marine life to the IMAX

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

Under The Sea 3-D is the latest visually stunning documentary to grace IMAX screens. If you've never experienced one of the 3-D documentaries produced by IMAX, you're missing out on one of the most immersive cinematic experiences around.

Movie **feature**

Producer Toni Myers has been working in this unique format since its humble origins, editing North Of Superior. "That was the very first IMAX film, made in 1970. I just thought it was utterly amazing and kept trying to work in the format," she said.

Quickly seduced by the possibilities of IMAX, Myers has indeed been working in the format in various capacities ever since. She served as a producer on Under The Sea 3-D and is quick to acknowledge the difficulties of shooting in IMAX.

According to Myers, the 3-D cameras her production team used for the film were "the size of a bar fridge and by the time you get it in the housing it weighs 1,300 pounds."

The cameras had to be operated by two cameramen simultaneously and needed to be hoisted out of the water with a crane to reload film after only three minutes had been shot.

"If you think of those beautiful underwater landscape shots tracking towards a giant cuttlefish and consider that it's two guys pushing a 1,300-pound camera through the water, it's pretty amazing."

Dive teams of eight people were required just to operate the cameras, but the technical challenges were hardly the only difficult part of the shoot. Simply finding the underwater stars of the film was challenging enough.

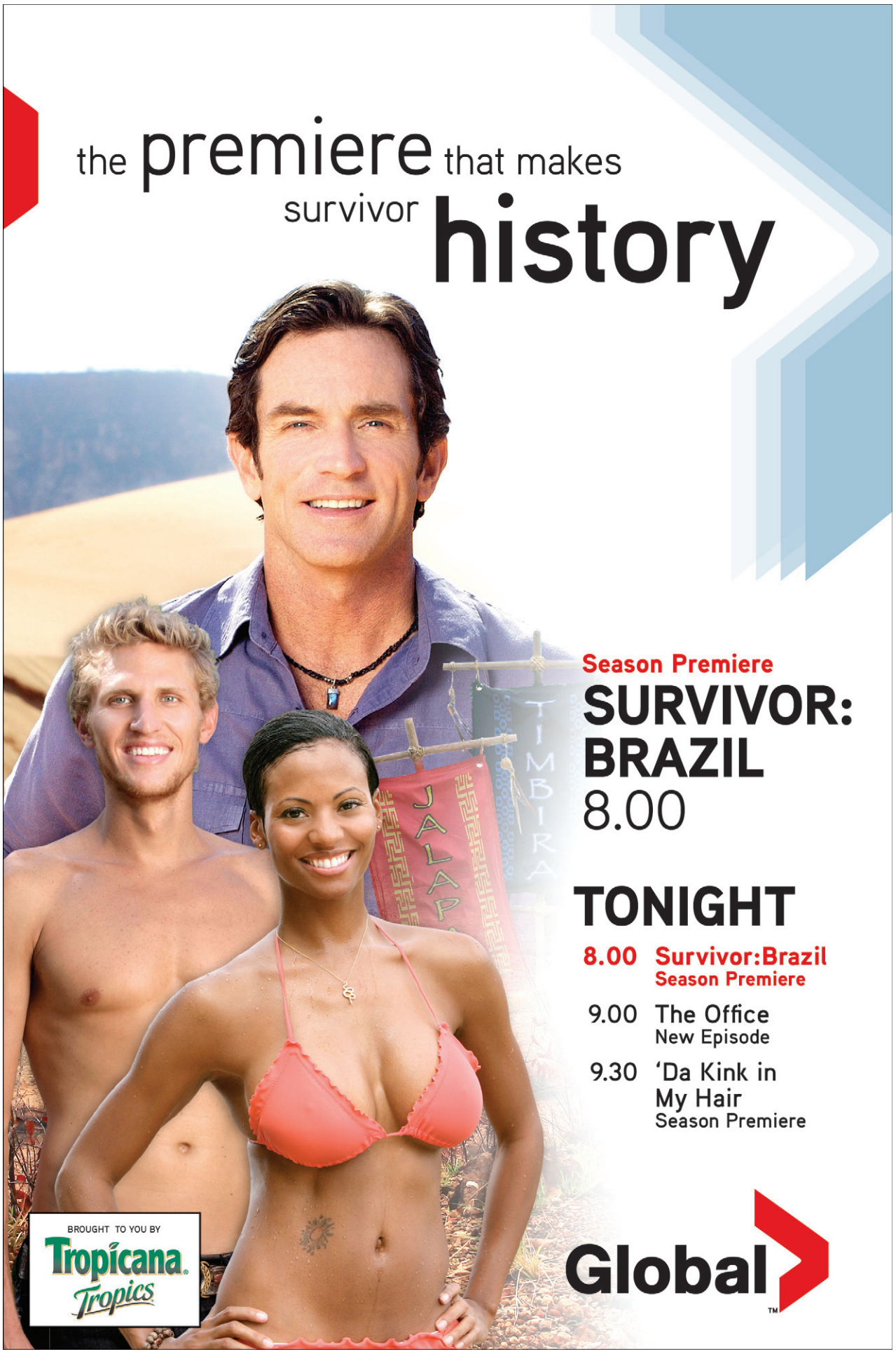
"The fish don't hit their marks, so the whole film is a testament to director Howard Hall and his great skill. Because there's very little you can predict," says Myers, adding, "We start with a shopping list of the species that we want and plan expeditions around that. Howard is in touch with marine biologists who are studying the shooting locations and can give us predictions about the species we're interested in."

Of course, finding certain species proved to be incredibly difficult due to depleting populations.

"I think we had to travel something like 600 miles to a new location just to find the sea snakes we wanted because they're so depleted. We're not kidding when we say that they are all wallets, shoes, and hand baskets," says Myers.

Release date

- Under The Sea 3-D opens across Canada tomorrow.



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Red carpet hosts
Producers say ABC morning news co-anchor Robin Roberts, fashion guru Tim Gunn and EW managing editor Jess Cagle will host the official Academy Awards pre-show, Oscars Red Carpet 2009. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Designers vie for best red-carpet dress

Calling all fashionistas: Oscar wants you.

The film academy is adding a Project Runway element to the Oscars this year by asking the public to vote on which dress the trophy presenter will wear.

The academy tapped seven emerging designers to create gowns for the competition. They unveiled their entries Tuesday during the annual Oscar fashion show at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' headquarters.

The winning dress "will be seen on Oscar night probably more than any other gown on the red carpet,'' said Oscar fashion coordinator Patty Fox. She and show producers Laurence Mark and Bill Condon selected the competing designers.

Moire Conroy, Alan Del Rosario, Sam Kori George, Marianne Kooimans, Maria Pinto, Nicolas Putvinski and Robert Rodriguez each had about three weeks to design their dress.

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

Del Rosario, who already counts Michelle Pfeiffer and Debra Messing among his clients, said he was inspired by "old Hollywood glamour'' when creating his strapless silk-and-lace mermaid gown.

"The Oscars is all-time glamour,'' he said. "It's one of those events when a woman can go all out.''

Maria Pinto, famous for making Michelle Obama's Inauguration Day dress, called her Oscar entry "modern Marie Antoinette.''

"The Oscars is all-time glamour. It's one of those events when a woman can go all out."
Alan Del Rosario

The strapless silver column "is a study of control and release,'' she said, noting that pleats at the waist shape a makeshift bustle in back.

Fans can vote online for their favourite gown until Feb. 17. The winner of Oscars Designer Challenge will be announced during the red-carpet show before the Feb. 22 Academy Awards.

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Oasis to play in China

British rock band Oasis will play their first China concerts in Beijing and Shanghai in early April.

WARNER MUSIC PHOTO

Oasis will play gigs in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong in April.

The musicians have announced on their website that the shows will take place April 3 at Beijing's Capital Arena and April 5 at the Shanghai Grand Stage as part of a world tour promoting their latest release, Dig Out Your Soul.

Oasis will also play a previously announced show in Hong Kong on April 7.

The band said in the announcement "Oasis are excited to announce their first-ever shows in China as part of their current world tour."

Formed in Manchester in 1991, Oasis broke out with their 1994 album Definitely Maybe, as part of the 1990s Britpop explosion.

Oasis are one of a growing number of Western musical acts travelling to China, following the Rolling Stones and Elton John.

Growing exposure to foreign tastes has created fans among middle class Chinese, although audiences at such concerts tend to be drawn heavily from China's large expatriate population.

China closely regulates live performances, even more so since Icelandic singer Bjork embarrassed authorities by shouting "Tibet!" at the end of a Shanghai concert last year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paisley leads Country Music noms

MUSIC Brad Paisley leads all finalists for the Academy of Country Music Awards with six nominations.

The finalists were announced in Nashville, Tenn., Wednesday morning and Paisley garnered nods for entertainer of the year and male vocalist. He is also a finalist for record, song and video of the year for Waitin' on a Woman. Paisley is also up for vocal event of the year for Start a Band with Keith Urban.

Heidi Newfield is a strong contender, picking up nominations in five categories, including song of the year and video of the year for Johnny & June.

The winners will be announced during the Academy of Country Music Awards from Las Vegas on April 5. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Goody

Heroic pilot cracks up Letterman crowd

He has gotten a phone call from the president, a key to New York City and a standing ovation at a Broadway show. Now, the pilot who safely landed his crippled jetliner in the Hudson River has gotten another all-American tribute — a ribbing from David Letterman.

Capt. Chesley (Sully) Sullenberger and fellow crew members from US Airways Flight 1549 appeared Tuesday on the Late Show with David Letterman.

They retold the dramatic story of the Jan. 15 flight, but this time with plenty of laughs. One example, according to the show's transcript: Letterman mentioned a passenger who opened a door in the rear

J.P. FILO/CBS

First Officer Jeffrey B. Skiles, left, and Capt. Chesley Sullenberger, centre, on The Late Show with David Letterman.

of the plane, letting in water from the near-freezing river until it was closed again. Sullenberger jokingly replied: "I think it was Steve Martin who did that," referring to the comedian.

And when the host asked whether the Airbus A320 was designed to float, Sullenberger deadpanned: "We were very glad that this one remained intact and did." The captain even addressed his now-ubiquitous nickname: "With a name like Chesley, Sully is just going to have to happen."

Sullenberger's crew mates generated several chuckles of their own, as when Letterman marvelled at the plane's passage about 300 metres over the George Washington Bridge minutes after birds apparently flew into and disabled both the aircraft's engines.

"It's better than zero feet," first officer and co-pilot Jeff Skiles said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Madonna, Moore to host Oscar party
Madonna and her actress friend Demi Moore will jointly throw an Oscar party on Feb. 22. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

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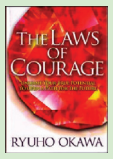

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Your bloody Valentine

Do you have what it takes to survive Feb. 14?

MattersofHeart

Steve Collins

A Valentine's Special

"The surest way of surviving Mandatory Romantic Gesture Day is being a little less of a schmuck to your beloved the other 364 days of the year."

Here we go again. Feb. 14 pitilessly approaches, gentlemen, and you have to think of something fast. I, of all people, have been assigned to help you. This may not end well.

The entire premise that the romantic onus is on you may seem sexist, but in my experience, women have very little to worry about on Valentine's Day, apart from how abjectly you're about to blow it. The ideal gift for most guys I know is the same thing every year. (Two hints: It costs nothing and fits perfectly).

For you, things are trickier. On Monday, my Metro colleague Anne Hines offered some perceptive if terrifying advice: "Begin with the gift. The gift is vital. But do not stress yourself thinking a gift has to be big or expensive. It just has to be perfect…To a woman, a gift says, 'This is how I see you. This is how I feel about you in my deepest most truthful heart of hearts.'"

Yeah, thanks, Anne. That's a load off. Just find the flawless, enduring symbol of your souls entwined. In a store somewhere. By Saturday. Shall I compare thee to this heart-shaped pendant thou shalt never wear again?

Even if by some miracle or fluke you nail it this year with the perfect gift, the perfect day, the perfect words, what about next year? How are you going to top yourself?

The surest way of surviving Mandatory Romantic Gesture Day is being a little less of a schmuck to your beloved the other 364 days of the year, and hence having less to make up for with this annual Hail Mary. This does you no good right now, of course, and for that I am truly sorry. You should probably stop wasting your ever-shortening time reading this.

Also, never underestimate the power of dumb luck. That was my way out, my only way. I found someone so perfect for me that, among her many thrilling virtues, she hates the pressure of these occasions, too, so we skip them. (This, I know, is no good to you either. You can't have her.)

Neither of us has ever broken down and unilaterally bought a surprise gift, thereby violating our mutual non-aggravation pact and upending our domestic nirvana. Even as our friends mock our lameness, we smugly congratulate each other on having beaten the system.

But she's got a birthday coming up, a big one.

Here we go again.

Steve Collins lives, writes and walks in Ottawa.

Valentine'sDay

TO	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/12/09	265	353	2	TVO	e2	e2	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Blackpool		Masterworks "Alice Neel" (N)		
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Survivor: Tocantins (N)		The Office (N)	Kink in Hair	The Unit		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	The Nature of Things (N)		Doc Zone (HDTV) (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Ugly Betty (N)		30 Rock	30 Rock	Hell's Kitchen		News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Grey's Anatomy (N)		ER "The Family Man" (N)		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim (N)	2009 Orange British Academy Film Awards				News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Météo	Nouv. mondes	*L'Air de Paris* ★★★ (1954, Drame) Jean Gabin, Arletty.				Volt
	-	-	14	-	Raymond	Raymond	News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	Smallville "Prey" (HDTV)		Supernatural (HDTV)		Enrique Iglesais: Live at the Odyssey Arena		
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Survivor: Tocantins (N)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		(10:01) Eleventh Hour		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim (N)	The Office (N)	30 Rock	ER "The Family Man" (N)		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Ugly Betty (N)		Grey's Anatomy (N)		(10:02) Private Practice (N)		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Wife Swap (N)		Eleventh Hour (HDTV) (N)		(10:02) Private Practice (N)		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	The 40th NAACP Image Awards (HDTV) (Live)				Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Goodnight Swt.	Doc Martin		Voyages of Discovery		MI-5 "Traitor's Gate"		Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Smallville "Prey" (HDTV)		Supernatural (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Friends	KTLA News	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smallville
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	Road to the Games (N)		CBC News: The National		Living City: A Critical Guide		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	Kudlow Report		House of Cards (N)				On the Money		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	Hockeycentral	NHL Hockey Toronto Maple Leafs at Tampa Bay Lightning. (HDTV) (Live)					Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show "Opening Night" (HDTV)						SportsCentre	
	411	457	58	OLN	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Survivorman		Mantracker		Dog the Bounty Hunter		Survivorman
	417	406	81	SC	NASCAR Racing: Camping World Truck Series Qualifying				NASCAR Racing Sprint Cup -- Gatorade Duel at Daytona. (HDTV)				
family	551	542	25	YTV	H2O, Just Add	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Zixx Level	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach		Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	*The Matrix* ★★★ (1999, Science Fiction) Keanu Reeves.			
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Divine Design	House	Confidential	Save Us-House	Divine Design-Basements		Maxed Out
	570	580	29	MM	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	America's Best Dance Crew		America's Best Dance Crew		Punk'd	Punk'd	Video on Trial
	615	520	31	A&E	The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV) (N)		The Beast (HDTV) (N)		The Beast
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	*Un Amore Americano* ★ (1992) Anthony Raymond Olson.				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Back In	AC/DC: No Bull			Revival	Confessions of a Teen Idol		Listed
	575	583	38	CMT	CMT Greatest Tear Jerker		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Coyote Ugly
	616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		Love-Death	Love-Death	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	*Grandma's Boy* ★ (2006, Comedy)		
	620	523	40	BVO	Camera	Snapshot	Bathroom Divas-Opera Star		*Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* (2005)			Manitowapow	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Bulging Brides	Bulging Brides	Last 10	Last 10	The Biggest Loser		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Hung Out to Dry"		Lost Worlds		Deep Wreck Mysteries		NCIS "Hung Out to Dry"		Ancestors
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	VIP	Gong Show	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Holmes on Homes		The Fix	Disaster DIY	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	*Domestic Disturbance* (2001, Suspense)		
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park	*Why Do Fools Fall in Love* ★★ (1998, Biography) Halle Berry.					Baldwin Hills	Baldwin Hills	Judge Hatchett
	627	528	50	SPC	Rabbit Fall	Rabbit Fall	Lost		Star Trek: Voyager		Zombiemania		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Mom & Dad	After	MTV News	Cribs	Making the Band 4 (N)		The Girls of Hedsor Hall		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Make or Break	Naked Fashion	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Unwrapped	Secret Life of	Family	Glutton-Punish.	Ace of Cakes
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Wait for God	'Allo, 'Allo!	*Kiss Me Goodbye* ★★ (1982, Romance-Comedy)				Poltergeist
	621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	Creepiest Couples		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Ni Hao, Kai-lan	Nght Grdn	Toot & Puddle	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
	115	711	101	TVA	Histoires-filles	Star Académie:	La Classe de 5e (HDTV)		Taxi 0-22 (SC)	Caméra café	TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Most Haunted		Most Haunted		*Passion*	Homicide File	Psychic Inv.
	300	601	301	M1	*The Cradle* (2007, Suspense) Lukas Haas, Amanda Smith.				*Sleepwalking* ★★ (2008, Drama)			*The Killing of John Lennon*	
	305	612	306	PIX	(6:45) *The Sundowners* ★★★ (1960, Drama)				*Freddy vs. Jason* ★★ (2003, Horror)			(10:40) *Quills* (2000)	

critics'corner

Metal: A Headbanger's Journey
Is it the devil's music? Does it drive impressionable teens to commit violent crimes and suicide? In this documentary, anthropologist and self-described metalhead Sam Dunn turns his camera on heavy metal and the people who make it to explore the myths surrounding this musical genre and its hold on fans. Alice Cooper and the guys from Black Sabbath, Twisted Sister and Rage Against the Machine are among those interviewed. 9 PM on BVO

e2
You don't need to be a traffic engineer or an urban planner to know that there are just too many cars on the streets — especially in major cities, where driving across town isn't just a trip; it's an adventure. This six-part series looks at ways in which cities around the world are trying to alleviate the crowding and pollution caused by motor vehicles. This episode focuses on London. Brad Pitt narrates. 7 PM on TVO

SAG labour talks resume next week

CONTRACT Much-delayed contract talks between actors and the Hollywood studios are back on track. The Screen Actors Guild and the studios say they will meet for two days next week. The talks on Tuesday and Wednesday represent the first formal meeting since mediated talks broke down in November. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jolie slammed for refugee comment

PEOPLE A senior Thai diplomat has rebuked Angelina Jolie for speaking out on behalf of refugees from Myanmar. Jolie is deeply involved in the plight of refugees in her capacity as a UN goodwill ambassador. She called on the Thai government to respect the human rights of Myanmar's Rohinyga "boat people." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

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Paris sees the light... er, Twilight
Paris Hilton finally gets all the fuss about the movie Twilight. She recently saw the hit film and is now smitten with Robert Pattinson. "Now I understand all the hype. I just didn't get it before, but now it all makes sense," Hilton told E! News. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Courtney's moving to London

RELOCATION Courtney Love is moving to the U.K., femalefirst.co.uk reports. The former Hole singer is growing tired of life in Los Angeles and is planning to buy a house in Britain for her and daughter Frances Bean, 16.

Courtney said: "Buckinghamshire is where I want to go. I read Country Life magazine every week. I'm fed up with Los Angeles. It's full of crazy people. People criticize Britain but it's still a cleaner, safer place to live than Hollywood." However, Courtney, who's also looking at London properties, will only move if arch-rival Madonna remains in her native America, where she has been since splitting from director Guy Ritchie.

She added to Britain's Daily Star newspaper: "Madonna had better stay the hell away from London when I move here to live. There's no room for us both." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Harry's in hot water yet again

BEHAVIOUR After putting his foot in his mouth with comments about a Pakistani army officer, Prince Harry is now under fire again for another racially insensitive remark, having apparently told a comic, "You don't sound like a black chap," people.com reports.

Harry, allegedly attempting to be funny, delivered the line in November, when black comedian Stephen K. Amos performed at Prince Charles' 60th birthday party. Amos spoke about the incident this week on a U.K. chat show. At the time, recalled Amos, "I wanted to say, 'How is I supposed to sound?'"

Reaction to the exchange has been strong. "Many young people will be disgusted by his remark," said Naomi Byron, national secretary of Youth Against Racism in Europe, reports the U.K.'s Daily Mirror.

"But it is not just Prince Harry that is at fault. The aristocratic, rich circles he moves in obviously don't have a problem with this kind of racist stereotyping." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Rihanna cancels Jakarta concert

ATTACK FALLOUT Rihanna's concert scheduled in Jakarta today has been cancelled, the show's tour promoter has announced — citing "an assault case involving Rihanna's boyfriend," singer Chris Brown, people.com is quoting published reports as saying

Rihanna, 20, withdrew from performing at the Grammys on Sunday — the same day Brown, 19, was arrested and charged with making a criminal threat. He was subsequently released on $50,000 US bail.

On Tuesday, her show in Malaysia was similarly canceled. The Jakarta cancellation marks the second time Rihanna has pulled out of a concert in the Indonesian capital. In November, the show didn't go on after the Australian government issued a travel warning in the wake of the executions of the three men convicted of the 2002 Bali bombings. People.com is also reporting that new details have emerged about the midnight altercation between Brown and Rihanna that led to Brown being booked on a felony criminal threat charge on Sunday.

"Chris knocked her around," a source close to the couple tells People magazine. "Black eye, blood, bruises. She had to be treated by a doctor."

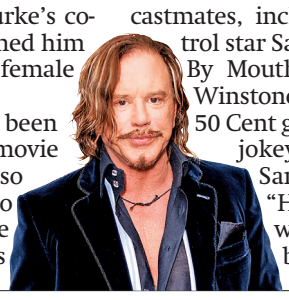
The site also alleges a police source has confirmed to People the singer suffered a black eye as well as "a swollen split lip and two red and purple contusions on either side of her forehead."

The website continues by saying the source, who described police photos of Rihanna, added, "She looked distraught and in a lot of pain. Her eyes were closed because she was looking down." METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Rourke's new nickname: Half-Day Mickey

ANTICS Mickey Rourke's costars have nicknamed him Half Day Mickey, femalefirst.co.uk reports.



The actor has been working on new movie 13 but had to take so much time off to promote The Wrestler that his castmates, including Control star Sam Riley, Nil By Mouth actor Ray Winstone and rapper 50 Cent gave him the jokey moniker. Sam revealed: "He was always jetting back and forth so we called him Half Day Mickey. "He'd always p— off and do whatever it was he was meant to be doing somewhere else. I think he really feels lucky and he's just milking it for all its worth. And good on him." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Surgery prep procedure leaves Usher's wife in grave condition

ILLNESS Usher's wife reportedly suffered cardiac and respiratory arrest during a liposuction operation, femalefirst.co.uk is reporting.

Tameka Foster was due to undergo the cosmetic surgery at Sirio-Libanes Hospital in Sao Paulo, Brazil, last Friday but fell seriously ill when she was being anesthetized for the procedure.

She was then induced into a coma for 24 hours, and is now said to be recovering, the gossip website alleges. A spokesman for the hospital refused to comment on the allegations published by Brazilian news website G1, saying: "The family has demanded total privacy. The hospital is barred from giving any information."

Usher cancelled concerts in the U.S. and rushed to his wife's side as soon as she fell ill. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Josh Groban says he's 'perpetually single'

DATING Fans may swoon over his soulful singing, but Josh Groban is still unattached, intouchweekly.com reports. "I seem to be perpetually single," the baritone bachelor said at a recent MusiCares Tribute. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Dane stays mum on co-star rumours

DEPARTURES With rumours swirling that Katherine Heigl and T.R. Knight are leaving Grey's Anatomy, Ellen DeGeneres tried to get answers out of co-star Eric Dane when he stopped by her show. But Dane remained mum. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jessica's 'so happy' with new curves

IMAGES During Jessica Simpson's first live TV appearance since her much-scrutinized weight gain, us magazine.com reports, the singer said of her new curves: "Honestly, I am right where I'm supposed to be. I am so happy." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Clooney said to be dating Bhutto niece

ROMANCE Actor George Clooney is reportedly smitten with Fatima Bhutto, 26, the niece of slain Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto. The two met at an international conference last year, according to the National Enquirer. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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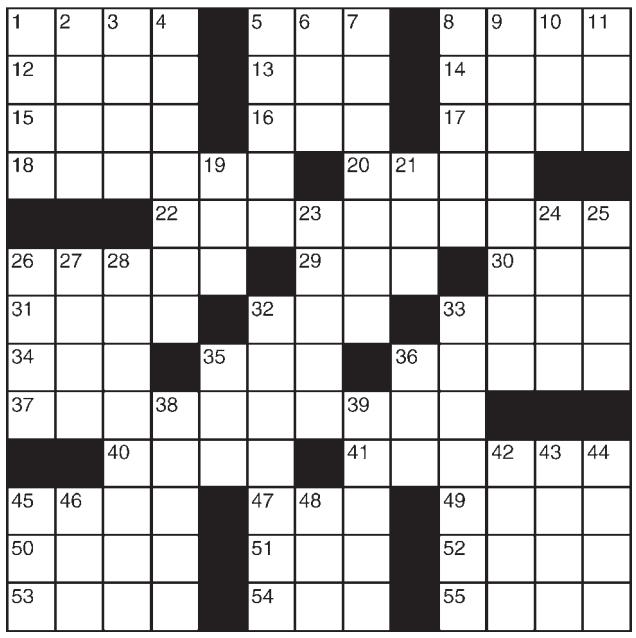

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

5				1				8
	1				9	3	5	
	6		2	7				
	3					5		
1		5				2		4
		7					6	
				6	8		2	
	2	3	1				4	
9				4				5

Crossword across

1 Seed covering
5 Shrill bark
8 State with conviction
12 Conflagration
13 Leading lady
14 Bygone VHS alternative
15 Oriental nursemaid
16 Scratch
17 St. Louis landmark
18 Call a spade a shovel?
20 Price
22 Woman of letters?
26 Horsey laugh
29 The whole enchilada
30 Gear tooth
31 Benedict XIV, e.g.
32 Expert
33 Enthusiastic
34 Tackle the comestibles
35 "Whadja say?"
36 Wise lawgiver
37 Staff-meeting prop, often
40 Options list
41 Render defenseless
45 Leno's prominence
47 Pi follower
49 Otherwise
50 TV clown
51 Pinch
52 Exploding star
53 Crystal gazer
54 Collection
55 Agcy.

Crossword down

1 Somewhere out there
2 Frost
3 Persia, now
4 English Channel port
5 Mocha's country
6 Actress Gardner
7 Fabric used for sheets
8 Disconcert
9 Upright
10 List-ending abbr.
11 "Go, team!"
19 Wrestling surface
21 Pussycat's partner
23 Topped chip
24 Not "for here"
25 Big Apple cardinal
26 Jet forth
27 Ancient mariner?
28 Make as good as possible
32 Moderate brown shades
33 Unexpected blessing
35 Coop denizen
36 — Lanka
38 Choir member
39 Take as one's own
42 Burn soother
43 Answer an invite
44 Vegan's no-no
45 Couric's employer
46 Weeding tool
48 Waste not a moment

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

5	9	2	4	8	7	1	3	6
8	3	6	5	2	1	9	4	7
7	1	4	6	3	9	8	5	2
3	5	1	8	4	2	7	6	9
2	7	8	9	5	6	3	1	4
6	4	9	7	1	3	5	2	8
9	6	3	2	7	5	4	8	1
1	8	7	3	6	4	2	9	5
4	2	5	1	9	8	6	7	3

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Sizzling Beef Fajitas

INGREDIENTS:
50 ml (1/4 cup) fresh lime juice
5 ml (1 tsp) chili powder
4 ml (3/4 tsp) oregano
4 ml (3/4 tsp) ground coriander
1 ml (1/4 tsp) black pepper
375 g (12 oz) well-trimmed beef sirloin
2 large onions, thickly sliced
2 large red peppers, cut lengthwise into flat panels
50 ml (1/4 cup) minced cilantro
4 flour tortillas, about 18 cm (7 in.) each
1 l (4 cups) shredded romaine lettuce
50 ml (1/4 cup) sour cream

METHOD:
1. Combine lime juice, chili powder, oregano, coriander and black pepper in medium bowl.
2. Place beef in shallow bowl and spoon 2 tbsp lime mixture on top; turn to coat both sides. Let stand while broiling vegetables.
3. Preheat broiler. Spray broiler pan with non-stick cooking spray. Place onions and pepper pieces, skin-side up, on broiler pan. Broil 10 cm (4 inches) from heat until peppers are charred and onions are golden brown, 10 minutes. Remove, and when cool enough to handle, peel pepper and thickly slice. Add peppers and onions to lime juice mixture in bowl. Add cilantro and toss.
4. Broil beef to medium, eight minutes, turning once. Let stand five minutes, then thinly slice. Broil tortillas until lightly browned, 15 seconds per side.
5. Place beef, peppers, onions, lettuce, sour cream and tortillas in serving containers. Let each person fill his or her own tortilla.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Use humour with a new admirer. A puzzling professional will create an amusing invention. Tread softly around an ailing person.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Protect yourself when dealing with legal issues. Don't push your ideals in a war between rookies. A person makes an insensitive comment.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
You must be patient with unreliable people. It's not a good time to make light of serious problems. A comical grumbler will set a date with you.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Guidance comes to you in unusual ways. Don't announce your intentions to strangers. Make sure that that your reality check doesn't bounce.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Avoid snooping and being too serious. An irritated friend is especially sensitive to teasing today. Something that happens will astound you.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
You'll get a surprise if you forgot something. Don't be unnerved by a strange event. Frustration with obsolete rules won't be eased by fighting.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Someone's admiration gives you some pleasure. You need to think about what went wrong. Relationship decisions perplex you and cause delays.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A blissful guy makes you a tantalizing offer. A funny girl gives you a helping hand. A man has something valuable to share.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Independence is more important when procedures change. Don't delay fixing damaged equipment. Unexpected events keep you hopping.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Today's miserable moments will soon be forgotten. Kindred spirits will meet your challenges. You'll be enthusiastic when amazing things unfold.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Accept a kind invitation from an encouraging friend. Be sincere when praising somebody. Financial plans must be adjusted as soon as possible.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
You can be sure that your hard work will build up a project. Think hard before refusing an invitation. Slow down before making decisions.

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™The Hyundai names, logos, product names, feature names, images and slogans are trade marks owned by Hyundai Auto Canada Corp., and used under licence. ♦New sale prices are calculated after deducting price adjustments off the lease/finance starting prices. Price adjustments are available on all 2009 Accent 3 Dr. L of $3,600/2009 Elantra L 5-speed of $3,850/2009 Sonata GL I4 5-speed of $3,000/2009 Tucson L 5-speed of $2,200/2009 Santa Fe GL 2.7L FWD 5-speed of $4,000. Prices for models shown (after deducting price adjustment): 2009 Accent GL Sport of $15,395/2009 Elantra GL Sport Package 5-speed of $17,895/2009 Sonata Limited of $28,495/2009 Tucson Limited of $29,995/2009 Santa Fe Limited of $32,445. Delivery and Destination charges of $1,495/$1,495/$1,565/$1,760/$1,760, registration, insurance, licence fees and all applicable taxes are excluded. Delivery and Destination charge includes freight, P.D.E., dealer admin fees and a full tank of gas. ◊Purchase financing available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services on 2009 Accent/2009 Elantra/2009 Sonata/2009 Tucson/2009 Santa Fe/2009 Elantra Touring models with a finance rate of 0%/0%/0%/0%/0%/2.9% for 36/36/48/48/72 month terms. Financing example: 2009 Tucson L 5-speed (after deducting the price adjustment) at 0% per annum equals $432.50 per month for 48 months for a total obligation of $20,755. Cash price is $18,995. Example price includes Delivery & Destination. Example price excludes registration, insurance, licence fees and all applicable taxes. ‡Starting price for model shown: 2009 Elantra Touring GL 5-speed of $18,795. Price excludes Delivery and Destination charges of $1,495, applicable licence fees, insurance, registration and all taxes. Delivery and Destination charge includes freight, P.D.E., dealer admin fees and a full tank of gas. ♦♦Offers available for a limited time and subject to change or cancellation without notice. See dealer for complete details. Dealer may sell for less. ASee your dealer for eligible vehicles and full details of the Graduate Rebate Program. ††Hyundai's Comprehensive Limited Warranty coverage covers most vehicle components against defects in workmanship under normal use and maintenance conditions.